DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 295 318 EA 020 080

AUTHOR Bates, Richard
TITLE Liberalism, Marxism and the Struggle for the State: Prolegomena to the Study of Public Administration. ESA844, Administrative Context of Schooling.
INSTITUTION Deakin Univ., Victoria (Australia).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-7300-0301-9
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 155p.; For related documents, see EA 020 081 and EA 020 091-094.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, Deakin University Press, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria 3217, Australia (Stock No. ESA844M04; $12.50 Australian; quantity and educational discounts).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Collected Works - General (020) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Bureaucracy; Democracy; Foreign Countries; *Ideology; Individualism; *Liberalism; *Marxian Analysis; Marxism; *Political Socialization; Social Development; Social Stratification; *Social Values; Sociocultural Patterns

ABSTRACT

This volume is part of a series of monographs from Australia devoted to outlining an alternative approach, based on neo-Marxist concepts, to educational administration. The opening essay examines the historical development of liberalism as a key to understanding the relations between the state, civil society, and the economy, and the development of the mediating role of public bureaucracies. The essay is divided into three major parts. The first part describes the emergence of English liberalism and its associated ideas of representative democracy, as contrasted with continental notions of participatory democracy exemplified in Rousseau. The second part examines three contemporary analyses of the emerging dilemmas of the liberal, democratic state. The third section examines Marxist class analysis and its effect on the understanding of relations between state, economy, and civil society. The analyses of Marx and Lenin are contrasted with that of Weber, and contemporary neo-Marxist analyses of crisis tendencies in the modern state are introduced. Four readings by separate authors follow: (1) "Nervous Liberals," by Michael Walzer; (2) "Bureaucracy and the State," by Erik O. Wright; (3)"What Does a Crisis Mean Today? Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism," by Jurgen Habermas; and (4) "Crisis Tendencies, Legitimation, and the State," by David Held. An annotated bibliography is included. (TE)

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ESA844 Administrative Context of Schooling

Liberalism, Marxism and the Struggle for the State: Prolegomena to the Study of Public Administration

Richard Bates

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Deakin University
Victoria 3217

Published by Deakin University, Victoria 3217
Distributed by Deakin University Press
First published 1985

© Deakin University 1985

Edited and designed by Deakin University Production Unit
Printed by Deakin University Printery

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-publication data

Bates, Richard J., 1941-
Liberalism, Marxism and the struggle for the state.

Bibliography.
ESA844.
ISBN 0 7300 0301 9.

1. Liberalism. I. Deakin University. School of Education. Open Campus Program.
II. Title. III. Title: Administrative context of schooling.

320.5'1

This book forms part of the ESA844 *Administrative Context of Schooling* course offered by the School of Education in Deakin University's Open Campus Program. It has been prepared by Richard Bates for the ESA844 *Administrative Context of Schooling* course team, whose members are:

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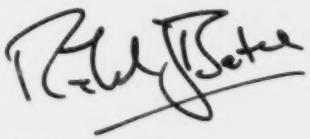
Students enrolled in the course are also supplied with a guide to the course.

Series introduction

It is not possible to understand the nature of educational administration without understanding the broader context of public administration or, further, the social and political debate over the nature of the state, civil society and the economy, and their relationships. The series of volumes of which this book is a part addresses these various issues. Beginning with a discussion of the contested relationship between the individual and the state, the politics of administration is set within the debate over liberalism, Marxism and critical theory, and the nature of the crisis of the modern state. The impact of this crisis on public administration is then examined, especially in terms of the 'new' public administration and the notion of public good. An examination of educational administration follows, as do studies of the administrative context of curriculum and of evaluation. Finally, a discussion of the dialectical nature of educational administration is presented.

The introductory essay of each volume is a digest of current debate and a contribution to it. So that readers may enter that debate rapidly key readings are appended, as is an annotated bibliography of key works in the field. We hope that this presentation of the debate will encourage others to join in the exploration of such issues in educational administration.



Richard J. Bates
Course team chairperson

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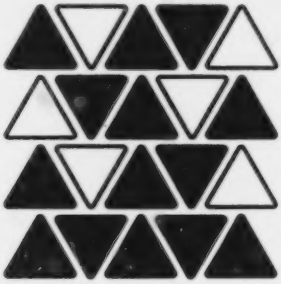

Introduction

Without exception in the modern state education is subject to governance by bureaucracy. The structures, funding, context, credentials, purposes and achievements of educators are everywhere subordinated to various forms of bureaucratic oversight. For the most part the bureaucracies are public bureaucracies—part of the larger processes of public administration which 'steer' the modern state. Public administration in turn is itself steered by political procedures which set public goals and demand public accountability.

It follows, then, that any attempt to understand the administrative context of education must involve an attempt to understand the nature of public administration. In turn, public administration cannot be understood without an appreciation of the theories and philosophies which guide our understanding of the politics of the state.

This monograph provides a brief introduction to such issues. The examination of the relations between the state, civil society and the economy, and of the mediating (or, as some would argue, inhibiting) role of public bureaucracies is, of course, a complex and abstract exercise. Such key concepts are themselves abstract and contentious even though their workings may have very concrete effects. The approach taken here is, however, historical and locates the development of such ideas within the continuing struggle to achieve various resolutions of the relations between the state (as protector and governor of the people), civil society (the people itself), and the economy (the productive and distributive arrangements of the society).

The monograph is divided into three major parts. The first deals with the emergence of English liberalism and its associated ideas of representative democracy. These are contrasted with Continental notions of participatory democracy through a brief discussion of Rousseau. The second part examines three contemporary analyses of the emerging dilemmas of the liberal, democratic state. These are considered through the eyes of two liberal commentators and one social democratic commentator. The third section examines the impact of Marxist class analysis on the understanding of relations between state, economy and civil society. Here the analyses of Marx and Lenin are contrasted with that of Weber, and contemporary neo-Marxist analyses of crisis tendencies in the modern state are introduced. This section in particular focuses on the emerging role of state bureaucracies—of public administration—and the difficulties and possibilities that such agencies present.

While no monograph the length of this one can hope to do justice to the complexity of the debate over the relations between society, the state and bureaucracy, I hope that the condensed and selective analysis presented here will provide an appropriate introduction to areas of debate which form the background to a contemporary analysis of public administration.

The origins and traditions of liberalism

Liberalism has been the dominant political philosophy of the Western world for the past three centuries. Emerging from the confusion attendant on the transformation of medieval culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, liberalism has concerned itself primarily with questions of the nature of the state, of civil society and of the individual, and of the nature of the relationships that should exist between them. Traditionally these questions have centred on the concepts of individuality, democracy and consent. In one form or another these questions dominated political debate in the West until Karl Marx introduced further considerations in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the central achievement of liberalism has been the construction of a notion of the state as a form of public power independent of both ruler and ruled and constituting an arena for the legitimation and imposition of authority in respect of the rights and obligations of each. This is not to say, of course, that the approaches to these issues have always been agreed among liberals. In fact the diversity of approach and argument is immense. None the less, running through the tradition is a unifying concern with the struggle of men (for the argument until very recently has largely excluded women) for liberty and for freedom from the impositions of the absolutist state, in the form of either the Monarchy or the Church.

The state first became an object of political analysis towards the end of the sixteenth century. As David Held (on whose analysis the first part of the current argument is largely based) has suggested:

> The historical changes that contributed to the transformation of medieval notions of political life were immensely complicated. Struggles between monarchs and barons over the domain of rightful authority; peasant rebellions against the weight of excess taxation and social obligation; the spread of trade, commerce and market relations; the flourishing of Renaissance culture with its renewed interest in classical political ideas (including the Greek city-state and Roman law); the consolidation of national monarchies in central and southern Europe (England, France and Spain); religious strife and the challenge to the universal claims of Catholicism; the struggle between Church and State – all played a part. As the grip of feudal traditions and customs was loosened, the nature and limits of political authority, law, rights and obedience emerged as a preoccupation of European political thought.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 2)

Foremost among those who were struggling with the new concerns was Thomas Hobbes who, in his book *De Cive* (first published in 1642) aimed 'to make a more curious search into the rights of states and duties of subjects' (Hobbes quoted in Skinner 1978, p. 349).

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)

Hobbes's starting point was the necessity of the involvement of the state in the prevention of what he saw as an otherwise inevitable civil war – 'such a war, as is of every man, against every man' (1962, p. 100). This necessity arises because

> . . . the laws of nature, as *justice, equity, modesty, mercy*, and, in sum, *doing to others, as we would be done to*, of themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like.
>
> (Hobbes 1962, p. 129)

The untrammelled indulgence of man's natural passions, according to Hobbes, makes 'the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (1962, p. 100). This contention is, he suggests, exemplified by

> . . . the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before.
>
> (Hobbes 1962, p. 101)

The major problem for men is therefore, that of

> . . . getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent . . . to the natural passions of men, when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their convenants . . .
>
> (Hobbes 1962, p. 129)

Hobbes's solution is the construction of an all-powerful state—the 'generation of the great LEVIATHAN' (1962, p. 132)—whose absolute power shall be sufficient to subdue the natural passions of men and enforce the laws of nature.

> The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another . . . is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety; and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgments, to his judgment.
>
> (Hobbes 1962, p. 132)

The construction of the state is, therefore, in principle the result of a contract between individuals. Its authority is that of the people. However, for Hobbes this contract is a once and for all affair and is incapable of being withdrawn. There is, therefore, little notion of the democratic state involved in Hobbes's conception. What is important, however, is Hobbes's insistence that *in principle* the existence of both society and the state is dependent upon agreement between free and equal individuals. Moreover, Hobbes was also enunciating one of the other major concerns of liberalism, that of finding an appropriate means for the expression of human nature which reconciled diverse individual interests. Hobbes also emphasised the importance of contract, consent and authority. Quite fundamental to Hobbes's proposals was the abiding tension in liberal philosophy between the claims of the individual and the power needed by the state to secure appropriate conditions in social and political life.

Hobbes's initial statement of many of the founding principles of liberalism marks the beginning of the modern conception of the state and sets out many of the parameters of the subsequent debate. However, Hobbes's position was also profoundly *illiberal* in certain respects, as John Locke was to point out.

John Locke (1632–1704)

Locke took particular exception to Hobbes's once and for all allocation of power to an absolute ruler. The problem with such a permanent allocation of absolute power of coercion, violence and oppression, Locke argued, was that if people could place so little trust in each other as to 'need' the coercion of an absolute ruler in order to lead a peaceful, commodious and productive existence, how could they be sure that the absolute ruler would himself be trustworthy? As Locke put it, such an argument suggests that

> ... Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done to them by *Pole-Cats*, or *Foxes*, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by *Lions*.
>
> (Locke 1967, p. 346)

Unlike Hobbes, Locke was not prepared to concede the once and for always allocation of authority to the absolute ruler. Rather, he argued that legitimate government always rested upon the consent of its citizens which could be revoked if the government failed properly to defend the interests of individuals in a state of nature.

> The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.
>
> (Locke 1966, p. 5)

The fundamental function of the state is, therefore, the defence of such rights as are laid down by God's will and enshrined in the law. Citizens will not, as might have been possible under Hobbes's absolute ruler, be subject to the arbitrary exercise of power, for those natural laws which govern the behaviour of citizens also govern the actions of government. The legislature, therefore, can be judged by its citizens according to its fulfilment of its obligations to protect the 'life, liberty and estate' of its citizens. Moreover, the citizens always retain the right to judge the behaviour of government.

> Who shall be judge whether the prince or legislature act contrary to their trust? ... The people shall be judge; for who shall be judge whether his trustee or deputy acts well, and according to the trust reposed in him, but he who deputes him, and must, by having deputed him, still have a power to discard him when he fails in his trust?
>
> (Locke 1966, p. 121)

Thus, rather than the absolutist state advocated by Hobbes, Locke argued for a state directed only towards the maintenance of law and order at home and the protection from aggression from abroad. For within the context of such a state 'individuals are best able by their own efforts to satisfy their

needs and develop their capacities in a process of free exchange with others' (Held 1983, p. 13).

It might be thought that it is a small step from Locke's conception of liberalism to the implementation of democratic government. However, while ideas of individual rights, majority rule, and a division of powers were certainly implicit in Locke's writings, the detailed working out of such practices was yet to be accomplished.

The extension of Locke's liberalism into a more detailed program for the development of a liberal democracy was a task undertaken by, among others, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill.

Liberal democracy: Bentham (1748–1832) and Mill (1773–1836)

The problem of the accountability of the governors to the governed, which was largely ignored by Hobbes and treated in a somewhat restricted fashion by Locke, was to become the central problematic in the work of Bentham and Mill. The purpose of government, argued Bentham, Mill and the early utilitarians, was to ensure the achievement of the greatest good of the greatest number in society and the minimisation of pain and evil. The only means by which this might be retained as a central purpose of government was through making government accountable to the greatest number. Thus,

> only through democratic government would there be a satisfactory means for choosing, authorizing and controlling political decisions commensurate with the public interest, i.e. the interests of the mass of individuals.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 15)

Fundamental to the shift towards liberal democracy was a shift from a religious towards a secular definition of the foundations of government. This was a shift brought about by the utilitarian's appeal to the emerging principles of science. Their attempt was to develop a theory of society based upon scientific rather than natural laws. Fundamental to this shift was the employment of the principle of utility which Bentham defined in the following way:

> By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness . . . or . . . to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual.
>
> (Bentham 1948, p. 126)

It follows that the role of government is to promote the maximum utility, that is, the maximum happiness of the maximum number of its citizens. This 'scientific' principle replaces the previous dependence on theories of natural or divine law.

Individuals, moreover, in order to maximise their personal utility or happiness, must be free to pursue their interests with minimum restrictions, as different individuals pursue different goals in the achievement of their own happiness. Thus the role of the state is a minimal one of ensuring

> . . . the conditions necessary for individuals to pursue their interests without risk of arbitrary political interference, to participate freely in economic transactions, to exchange labour and goods on the market and to appropriate resources privately.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 16)

Governments, in this view, are bound to protect such conditions under which happiness may be pursued and 'abstain from all such measures as tend to the unhappiness of their subjects' (Bentham 1948, p. 55). Citizens are obliged to obey *'so long as the probable mischiefs of obedience are less than the probable mischiefs of resistance'* (Bentham 1948, p. 55).

For Mill and Bentham the individual pursuit of maximum utility or happiness in the fulfilment of desires was the fundamental right of the citizen and the state was to be organised so as to facilitate such pursuit by its members. As Held points out, however

> Their account of democracy establishes it as nothing but a logical requirement for the governance of a society, freed from absolute power and tradition, in which individuals have endless desires, form a body of mass consumers and are dedicated to the maximization of private gain. Democracy, accordingly, becomes a means for the enhancement of these ends—not an end in itself.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 17)

It was left to James Mill's son, John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) to argue in his essay *On Liberty* that only democracy was compatible with the pursuit of individual liberty and the highest and harmonious development of individual capacities. For J. S. Mill liberty of thought, discussion and action, as well as the pursuit of happiness, were fundamental in the development of reason. The development of reason, in turn, sustained liberty.

Representative democracy and the construction of a government accountable to the citizenry and committed to the development of reason and the protection of liberty were seen by Mill as means of developing and sustaining conditions supportive of individual and social development. As a corollary of this argument J. S. Mill, unlike his father or Bentham, also argued that gross disparities in wealth and power were incompatible with the maximisation of the good of the greatest number. Thus, in order to redress such disparities, ideas of universal sufferage and full citizenship for all members of society became incorporated into the notion of liberal democracy. It has, of course, taken a great deal of struggle on the part of the disenfranchised groups in many countries to make progress towards the realisation of the ideal.

The ideal of democracy is not, however, an agreed ideal. It is, like most of the ideas so far discussed, complex and contested. For instance, the distinction between representative and participatory democracy is one that was made with some force by Rousseau who argued, according to one commentator, that 'sovereignty not only originates in the people; it ought to stay there' (Cranston 1968, p. 30).

This contrast between the English notion of representative democracy and European notions of participatory democracy marks a major difference within liberal traditions, the former based upon a positivistic epistemology

and the latter upon a hermeneutic epistemology. The conflict between these traditions runs through the history of liberalism until the present.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778)

Rousseau began his analysis of the social contract with the following observation:

> Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they. How did this transformation come about?
>
> (Rousseau 1968, p. 49)

Basically Rousseau's answer was that it resulted from the separation of the governors from the governed. Even under the form of liberal representative democracy achieved in England, freedom was denied.

> The English people believes itself to be free; it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as the Members are elected, the people is enslaved; it is nothing.
>
> (Rousseau 1968, p. 141)

The only way in which the social contract could properly be fulfilled, argued Rousseau, was by a form of government that allowed both *self*-regulation and *self*-government, that is, by a form of direct, participatory democracy. In such a system the social contract would be continuously negotiated by an active, involved citizenry meeting together to decide what should be done and to construct laws for the conduct of social affairs. As Held puts the argument:

> The governed, in essence, should be the governors. In Rousseau's account, the idea of self-government is posited as an end in itself; a political order offering opportunities for participation in the arrangement of public affairs should not just be a state, but rather the formation of a type of society—a society in which the affairs of the state are integrated into the affairs of ordinary citizens.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 22)

In essence, Rousseau was idealising a society without divisions, that is, a classless society—a notion to be taken up by Marx and his inheritors, though in a somewhat different fashion from that of Rousseau.

Summary

The foundations of the liberal democratic tradition were well in place by the end of the nineteenth century. Beginning with concerns over the freeing of individuals from the tyranny of absolute rulers, liberalism gradually developed a notion of the separation of the state from civil society. This grew into the definition of an ever-widening private sphere of action in personal, business and family life. Moreover, with the growth of market economies, the protection of individual rights within a framework of a minimal state became a central feature of liberal theory. Freedom of choice (and contract) became a demand in more and more areas of social and economic life, in marriage, in religion, and in political and economic affairs. Alongside these demands were those for the extension of the franchise and

at least a nominal political equality. Liberalism also upheld notions of reason and toleration in the face of established tradition and absolute authority.

While the benefits of liberalism were more apparent perhaps to males and property owners, and while progress towards a liberal democracy has been a painfully slow process of struggle which has yet to be fulfilled, the historical achievements of liberal ideals have been important in the struggle towards emancipation. Liberalism is not, however, without its dilemmas as we shall see in the next section.

Modern dilemmas of liberalism

The dilemmas of liberal democracy have become increasingly visible as the twentieth century progresses. Firstly, conflicts between state, economy and civil society appear to be intensifying. Secondly, as the traditional structures of institutional authority collapse, the governability of society is brought into serious question. Thirdly, the increasing complexity and differentiation of liberal society appears to jeopardise its cultural integrity.

There are many analyses of these difficulties. Three will be presented here. The first, that of Michel Crozier, is a wide-ranging liberal analysis of the crisis of democracy in Western Europe. The second, also a liberal analysis, is an examination by Thomas Spragens of the irony of liberal reason and its social and political consequences. The third analysis, that of social democrat Michael Walzer, examines current liberal dilemmas and the battle for the welfare state.

Crozier: The crisis of democracy in Western Europe

Crozier begins his analysis of the crisis of democracy in Western Europe (Crozier et al. 1975) with two assertions: firstly, that the vigorous growth experienced by European economies in the period since the Second World War, combined with the increased politicisation of the population, has led to significant increases in complexity which, cumulatively, overload the policy and decision-making processes of democracies; and secondly, that the development of bureaucratic mechanisms of decision making and control foster irresponsibility and the breakdown of the consensus that is required for the operation of effective government.

In support of the first argument concerning the problems resulting from complexity Crozier offers three major causes:

> First of all, social and economic developments have made it possible for a great many more groups and interests to coalesce. Second, the information explosion has made it difficult if not impossible to maintain the traditional distance that was deemed necessary to govern. Third, the democratic ethos makes it difficult to prevent access and restrict information ...
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 13)

Fundamentally, however, the problem is one of the increased complexity of industrial and post-industrial systems and their internal and external systemic interdependence. In such a situation 'the more decisions the modern state has to handle, the more helpless it becomes' (1975, p. 13). This is,

Crozier argues, because interdependence increases the possibility of blackmail on the part of more and more groups. In the end, he suggests that

> . . . nobody can control the outcomes of the system; government credibility declines; decisions come from nowhere; citizens' alienation develops and irresponsible blackmail increases, thus feeding back into the circle.
> (Crozier et al. 1975, pp. 13–14)

This situation focuses particular attention on the relationship between politics, defined as the decision-making process, and administration, defined as the implementation process. As a result of 'the general emphasis on bureaucratic rule, the lack of civic responsibility, and the breakdown of consensus' (p. 16), the tension between decision making and implementation is becoming severe. This is at least in part because two sets of actors are involved.

First, in the decision-making game, multiple special interest groups jockey for position and influence, and the resulting coalitions may vary considerably according to the issues involved. As a result, the pattern of decision making may not be particularly coherent.

Second, the *implementation* of such decisions is allocated to a completely different set of actors within state bureaucracies whose major orientation is to continuity and career within the power structure of the bureaucracy. Thus, not only may two quite discrete forms of decision making and reference be involved but 'it is quite frequent that the two games work differently and may even be completely at odds' (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 16). This is especially the case in countries such as Italy and France where the instability of the political system leaves decision making essentially in the hands of bureaucrats. Such a situation leads to a condition in which 'bureaucratic rule divorced from the political rhetoric and from the needs of citizens fosters among them alienation and irresponsibility which form the necessary context for the breakdown of consensus that has developed' (1975, p.17). Even in Northern Europe and Scandinavia 'a general drift toward alienation, irresponsibility, and breakdown of consensus also exists' (1975, p.18).

How did this situation come to be? Crozier suggests that there are three interrelated kinds of cause: social, economic and cultural.

As far as the *social* roots of the crisis are concerned Crozier lays the blame on the failure or 'liberalisation' of traditional agencies of social control and the inadequacies of contemporary replacements. In the first place the difficulty is that 'in every developed country man has become much more a social animal than before' (1975, p. 20). As a result, 'the social texture of human life has become and is becoming more complex and its management more difficult. Dispersion, fragmentation and simple ranking have been replaced by concentration, interdependence, and a complex texture' (1975, p. 20). Thus, despite the 'long record of traditional social control imposed upon the individual by collective authorities, especially the state, and by hierarchical religious institutions . . . a basic contradiction' (p. 21) tends to appear. This contradiction takes the following form:

> Citizens make incompatible claims. Because they press for more action to meet the problems they have to face, they require more social control. At the same time they resist any kind of social control that is associated with the hierarchical values they have learned to discard and reject.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 21)

The impact of *economic* growth also seems to have exacerbated tensions. Initially, during the post-war boom, economic growth was expected to bring increased prosperity to all sections of the community and to serve an integrative function. However, things did not turn out as expected. 'Instead of appeasing tensions, material progress seems to have exacerbated them' (1975, p. 22). Crozier argues that three main factors explain this paradox.

Firstly, economic growth produced rapid rises in expectations among all groups in the community which could not all be satisfied by the limited outcomes of the boom, especially during the ensuing period of stagnation in the seventies. The consequent feelings of frustration, especially among those denied any alteration in their relative economic condition, were inevitable. 'Moreover . . . citizens have been more sophisticated politically and especially vulnerable to invidious comparisons from category to category' (1975, p. 22)

Secondly, partly as a result of this condition of rising but frustrated expectations, working-class politics has become radicalised. Historically, 'at a simple level, the European revolutionary and nonconsensual ideologies of working-class parties and trade unions were associated with the economic and cultural lag that did not allow the working people a fair share in society's benefits' (1975, pp. 22–3). The forms of bargaining open to the working class have allowed only very partial success in attaining economic and social goals. Indeed, their participation in social decision making has been severely limited, thus fuelling a radical, non-consensual form of ideology.

Thirdly, the disruptive nature of accelerated social change brought about by rapid economic growth has been extremely costly. In such conditions various organisations and enterprises simply disappear while others face enormous growth. The geographic and occupational mobility imposed by such changes exact severe psychological costs. Associated with this rapid change in institutional structure and psychological security is a questioning of the remaining stable elements of traditional social control. Thus,

> in a society where social control had traditionally relied on fragmentation, stratification and social barriers to communication, the disruptive effect of change which tends to destroy these barriers, while forcing people to communicate, makes it more and more difficult to govern.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 24)

These three factors, Crozier argues, are interrelated effects of rapid economic growth. The associated pressures towards egalitarianism and mass participation produce a volatile political situation. In his words: '. . . the direct effect of economic and geographical disruptions requires proper handling; it requires the imposition of collective disciplines which these disruptions make it impossible to generate' (1975, p. 24).

As far as the *cultural* foundations of the present crisis are concerned, Crozier argues that three particular changes are involved. These he identifies

as the collapse of traditional institutions, the upsetting of the intellectual world and the impact of the mass media.

The collapse of traditional institutions is exemplified by Crozier's account of the decline of moral authority in the Church and in education in particular, but also in the Army and economic organisations. In each area, Crozier argues, 'the collapse is partly due to the disruptive effect of change, but it can also be viewed as the logical outcome of a general evolution of the relationship of the individual to society' (1975, p. 25). In particular, the freedom of choice for the individual in Western society has increased tremendously.

During the late sixties 'the amount of underlying change was dramatically revealed in the political turmoil of the period which forced a sort of moral showdown over a certain form of traditional authority' (1975, p. 26). This 'moral showdown' had a particular effect on the churches which lost both political and moral authority over their flocks, and within society at large. The hierarchy of the Church was particularly affected as recruitment to the bureaucracies of the Church declined and those who stayed within them gained more power and were more willing to challenge the moral authority of their superiors. The Catholic Church was the most severely affected by this because it was the most authoritarian. The recovery of moral influence, argues Crozier, depends upon the churches' acceptance of the collapse of their traditional authoritarian principles of social control.

Education, as a moral establishment with major functions in social control, was also affected by this crisis in authority. Education, becoming widely shared and secularised, has also become highly differentiated and lost its claim to a sacred mission. As Crozier argues, in contemporary society

> knowledge is widely shared. Teachers have lost their prestige within society, and the closed hierarchical relations that made them powerful figures in the classroom have disappeared. Routine makes it possible for the system to work and the sheer necessity and weight of its functions will maintain it in operation. But the malaise is deep. The dogmatic structure disintegrates; no one knows how to operate without a structure and new forms do not appear to be emerging.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 27)

This crisis has been particularly evident in higher education, where new forms and structures have expanded and challenged the role of the universities and where universities themselves have been challenged from within by their own student bodies demanding relevance and participation in the democratisation of the curriculum.

Other institutions are also affected, though perhaps less so, by this crisis in authority. The Army and various economic organisations are also subject to pressures for the assertion of individual choice and participation in decision making.

According to Crozier, two serious consequences flow from these increasing institutional weaknesses.

> First, the integration of the working class into the social game is only partial, especially in the Latin countries and in France. Second, the weight of the organizational middle classes of middle executives and supervisors constitutes a conservative, eventually paralyzing force.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 29)

Thus the collapse of traditional institutions of social control has not been accompanied by any major transformations of the relative power of middle and working classes, nor by new forms of participation which would allow the development of effective alternative means of social control.

These problems of traditional institutions are paralleled by another major change; that is, the upsetting of the intellectual world. This is a particularly important crisis, Crozier suggests, because of the importance of culture in post-industrial society in which 'knowledge tends to become a basic resource of humanity' (1975, p. 30). It is in the area of culture, the main province of intellectuals, that post-industrial society may face its most important challenge. Indeed,

> we seem to be, as a matter of fact, in a cultural crisis which may be the greatest challenge that confronts Western societies, inasmuch as our capacity to develop appropriate decision-making mechanisms—the ungovernability of our societies—is a cultural failure.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 30)

This failure has several important elements. For example, the prestige and authority of intellectuals is threatened by the growth in their numbers. 'The more intellectuals there are, the less prestige there is for each' (1975, p. 31). Distinctions that used to divide intellectuals from the masses now appear within the professions themselves, dividing the more from the less prestigious. At the same time, the growth in numbers allows the appearance of major disagreements between experts thus lessening the authority of professional bodies. The internal problems of the professions are matched by a shift in the orientation of post-industrial society which demands action-oriented rather than value-oriented expertise from its intellectuals.

> The more post-industrial society becomes intellectualized, the more it tends to displace traditional value-oriented disciplines to the benefit of action-oriented ones, that is, those disciplines that can play a direct role in policy-making.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 32)

The result is a crisis of identity in the very intellectuals who shape the cultural identity of the society as a whole. The crisis 'reinforces the uncertainties and driving anxieties it is expressing and . . . projects on the whole of society the crises of identity its members are experiencing' (1975, p. 32). One concomitant is the growth of protest and revolutionary postures among intellectuals which constitute 'the stronger apocalyptic nihilism that forms the texture of our vanguard culture' (1975, p. 33).

These factors, indicative, Crozier argues, of the upsetting of the intellectual world, are immediately made available through the mass media which constitute the third major change in the cultural institutions of our society.

The mass media are a particularly potent means of breaking down the old traditional structures of authority. This is largely because of their role in breaking down barriers to communication, upon which traditional structures, in part, relied. At the same time, the immediacy of the mass media is matched by its incoherence. The presentation of information in a rapid but incoherent fashion threatens the transmission of social, cultural and political norms.

> People's behaviour is not touched, really, but they can no longer rely on a coherent rationalization of its context, and they feel at a loss to find out how they relate to society. Anomic rebellion, estrangement from society, and alienation certainly have dangerously progressed because of this cultural void.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 34)

Despite this loss of cultural coherence, the media become a 'tremendous sounding board for the difficulties and tensions of society' (1975, p. 35) thus exacerbating the problems of governability. Moreover, the time lag which previously allowed governments time to reflect before public action has disappeared along with the willing allocation of tolerance and trust which made government possible. Again, the media also appear to be as loaded with ideology as the previous forms of old style oratory and rhetoric. All of these happenings reduce trust and confidence in government, exacerbating the crisis of democracy.

Finally, argues Crozier, *inflation* is a direct result of and contributor to the crisis. It is, he argues, 'an easy answer to the tensions of growth' (1975, p. 37). However, inflation also has a strong distorting effect on the relative positions of individuals and social groups. Thus it is an extremely destabilising process which, when rising to double digits, makes the cost seem more and more unbearable. Lack of confidence in the ability of government to control inflation also discourages public commitment and adds to the crisis of democracy and to the problems of government.

None the less, Crozier suggests, amid this plethora of problems, European society continues to hold on to a number of fundamental political beliefs: firstly, the freedom of the individual; secondly, equality—albeit a 'stratified kind of egalitarianism' (p. 44); and, thirdly, order and efficiency. These strange bedfellows are, you will recognise, the inherited values of liberalism. Their historical development in Europe, Crozier argues, has been possible largely because of inherited institutional structures which provide for order and continuity in social, cultural and political affairs, that is, the order of stratification and separation. Thus, European society has at its heart a basic contradiction between the authority of traditional structures and the commitment to liberal values.

> Earlier democratic processes had been built on the separation of groups and classes. They relied as much upon institutionalized noncommunication as on democratic confrontation. Authority was worshipped as an indispensable means for achieving order although it was rejected as a dangerous interference with freedom. Such a model could not stand structural changes that destroy barriers, force people to compete outside traditional limits, and suppress the distance that protected traditional authority.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 47)

The current crisis in the governability of democracy in Western Europe is, therefore, indicative of the tensions between the principles of order and efficiency located within traditional structures of authority and social control, and those other principles of liberalism such as liberty, democracy and equality which have continued to gain headway.

> A profound contradiction therefore develops. People tend to try different and more open practices or are being forced into them, but they cannot

> stand the tensions these practices bring. Since they cannot also stand the authority that could moderate these tensions and bring back order over them, a very resilient vicious circle develops.
>
> (Crozier et al. 1975, p. 47)

Thus, although most European countries 'have always had a very strong tradition of state control and bureaucratic procedures to substitute for their political systems' weaknesses' (p. 51), the current crisis of governability and democracy continues. The crisis is fundamentally that which has been at the heart of political philosophy since the beginning of liberalism.

Indeed, the political crisis that has overtaken liberalism is increasingly acknowledged to have its roots in a number of epistemological and philosophical confusions. One of the most elegant and sympathetic analyses of these confusions is that of the contemporary liberal philosopher Thomas Spragens.

Spragens: The irony of liberal reason

In his book *The Irony of Liberal Reason* (1981) Spragens argues that

> . . . the failure of liberalism to anticipate or to deal effectively with many of the problems of contemporary politics is a direct consequence of some rather profound philosophical weaknesses. The 'ironic flaw' of liberalism has been the incapacity of its deepest assumptions—ontological, epistemological, and anthropological—to sustain its finest aspirations and ideals.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 5)

In particular Spragens identifies four 'ironies'. The first is the reliance of liberalism on an image of man that was too narrowly rationalistic. That is, liberalism supposed that once the inhibiting effects of tradition and authority were wiped away 'the enlightened individual could be expected to discern his self-interest with careful reference to a felicific calculus and to behave accordingly' (1981, p. 6). Historically however, the expected consequences have not eventuated. Indeed

> . . . the belief that man needed only to be freed from his self-imposed tutelage to become a prudently hedonistic bourgeois has proved neither very durable nor very desirable.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 6)

Moreover,

> Both the lower 'irrational' components of the psyche—the deeper, darker passions—and the higher 'irrational' side of the psyche—the transcendental urges expressed in religion and art—have not been easily expurgatable. Nor has their repression by the forces of liberal rationality proved to be an unambiguous blessing.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 6)

The second irony identified by Spragens is the result of the idealised goal of the wholly free individual. The promised liberation has not, Spragens argues, been a wholly unmixed blessing. He quotes Durkheim's classic study of suicide resulting from the excessive social rootlessness of 'anomie' and Keniston's commentary on the psychological consequences of disorientation and alienation:

> Historical dislocation can bring an enormous sense of freedom, of not being bound to the past, of creating oneself at each moment of one's existence. Yet characteristically a philosophy of absolute freedom, based on a denial of any necessary relationship with the past, is usually a philosophy of the absurd; the signs of this freedom are not joy and triumph, but nausea and dread; and its possessors are not the creators but the Strangers and Outsiders of the universe.
>
> (Keniston quoted in Spragens 1981, p. 7)

The third irony to which Spragens draws attention is that which characterises the liberal view of power in society. Essentially this view held that with the advent of liberal reason and the consumation of Enlightenment rationality, political power would be superseded and force employed only in situations where individuals were not amenable to reason.

> Sustained by the happy faith that the hand of nature could produce an optimum of social equilibrium, the more optimistic liberals tended to view the exercise of political power as an outmoded vestige of the irrational past. A truly rational political order would relegate the use of force to the status of something resorted to only in exceptional circumstances. Rational men would perceive the coincidence of long-run self-interest and the common good. The coercive power of social authority would be necessary only to curb the acts of those who for some reason deviated from the rational norm.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 7)

This assumption of a natural felicific calculus resulting from the pursuit of individual self-interest had the unique effect of equating the social structure of liberal society with the 'natural order' of the universe. As a consequence, it laid the foundations for the emergence of a social Darwinism which argued that differences in social, political and economic power were not the result of contrived social arrangements but rather the inevitable result of a social order that was 'in the nature of things'. This was a particularly convenient ideology for the emerging middle class.

> This streak of naivete concerning the pervasive, if usually latent, function of power in society was, of course, ideologically useful to the bourgeoisie once they had triumphed historically. No greater balm for the conscience could be devised than the identification of one's own political ascendancy with the alleged disappearance of coercion from everyday social life. The relative deprivation, often severe, of the lower classes could be seen as one of those unfortunate but inevitable facts of life beyond the reach of human action. By transferring the social consequences of a capitalist economy to the heading 'laws of nature', the problem of power in society could be largely repressed.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 8)

This blindness to the role of power in society was a major flaw, one which was to have disastrous consequences for, as Laski pointed out, 'a doctrine ... that started as a method of emancipating the middle class changed, after 1789, into a method of disciplining the working class' (Laski 1936, p. 208)

The fourth irony identified by Spragens involved the liberal attempt to separate economic and political forces and to interpose the notion of *laissez-faire* between political and economic activities. The early liberals clearly

believed that the major distortions of trade within and between nations were due to the interference of political processes with the natural forces of the free market. If only, they argued, the market was given its head the invisible hand of economic order would assert itself: under conditions of free competition between a multitude of individual producers, harmony would be achieved.

> The tendency toward laissez-faire originally came from the perception that politically originated contrivances constituted the most important interference in the operations of the pure market model. Therefore, the early liberals espoused the elimination of state interference, since the free market not only would lead to an economic optimum but also would create a politically advantageous wide dispersion of power.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 9)

It was presumed that the logic of free competition between individuals in an open market would lead to the development of a system of rationally ordered priorities, rationally utilised resources, and rationally informed consumption. Unfortunately, as Braudel points out, 'there can be different versions of rationality within a single economy. There is the logic of free competition; and there is the logic of monopoly, speculation and power' (1982, pp. 576–7). Historically, the logic of monopoly capital has tended to overshadow the logic of free competition, especially since the Industrial Revolution. As Spragens argues:

> By the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, this prescription was made anachronistic by unanticipated developments in the workings of industrial capitalism. Monopolies, the great impediment to the beneficent consequences of a market economy, no longer were caused solely by political intrusion into the economic realm but instead could be generated internally by the economy itself.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 9)

As Braudel suggests, the distinction between the market economy and capitalism is crucial for, while the market economy might approximate to the liberal ideal, monopoly capitalism brought about its antithesis. It is, therefore, 'important not to attribute to capitalism the virtues and "rationalities" of the market economy itself' (Braudel 1982, p. 577). The irony of liberalism was that, by advocating the *laissez-faire* economy, it provided at least one of the prerequisites for the emergence of capitalist monopolies and the destruction of the free market.

Collectively these ironies constitute the groundwork for a disaffection with liberalism. Increasingly it has been noted that the achievement of liberal ideals has produced consequences quite different from those intended by the early liberals. The rhetoric of liberalism is at odds with reality; the ideal of liberalism at odds with its achievements. As Spragens suggests:

> At its outset, liberalism found strength in the congruence it perceived between the world as it ought to be and the world as it was coming to be. The liberal view of reality comfortably sustained liberal ideals. Today, however, the aspirations and ideals of liberalism seem to have become increasingly detached from the modern perception of reality. The *gestalt* has gradually fallen apart. Hence, the contemporary liberal must try to overcome an

> increasingly wide gap between what he wishes and what he sees. The nature of man and the shape of history seem to collide rather than coincide with the liberal vision.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 9)

Why is this so? Basically, argues Spragens, it is because the early liberal theorists got their epistemology wrong. It may, at first sight, appear surprising that the political troubles of liberalism are sheeted home to deficiencies in the liberal theory of knowledge. Spragens, however, argues that this is indeed the case.

> The political expectations the early liberals entertained were unrealistic because they were based, in part, on unrealistic premises about the possibilities of human knowledge.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 15)

On reflection this should not surprise us, however, for two reasons. Firstly, political revolutions are frequently premissed on new ways of seeing and understanding the world. 'Revolutions within the tradition of political theory ... are very often intimately associated with new departures in epistemology' (Spragens 1981, p. 11). Secondly, liberalism was peculiarly dependent upon the notion of the rational, reasonable man. Therefore questions of epistemology, of knowledge and of rationality were central to both the philosophy and politics of liberalism. Indeed,

> liberal political philosophy and political institutions have tended to place particular importance on the rational, and cognitive dimension of politics and have thus taken as the ideal model of political activity the interaction of rational, if self-interested, men. Politics, for the liberal, is therefore seen as properly and fundamentally an enterprise of persuasion, and liberals have accordingly emphasized the development of institutional channels of political persuasion: universal education, free speech, elections, parliamentary debate. If all of these channels are properly developed, the liberal assumption has run, political outcomes will be satisfactory.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 13)

The major problem, however, is that the philosophy of rationalism, of the Enlightenment, and of its inheritors such as scientific, positive and critical reason is fundamentally flawed. As a result,

> the image of reason that originated in close association with political liberalism and was generally believed to be its great ally has ... become instead an indifferent ally at best and, at worst, an outright enemy of liberal aspirations. As the liberal model of reason has developed, it no longer provides sustenance for the hopes of liberalism.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 13)

It seems then that the liberal ideal of certain, scientific or 'positive' knowledge of the natural order of things through observation and logical explication of relations and processes has proved to be unattainable: 'the new way of knowing was intrinsically incapable of fulfilling the expectations it had aroused' (Spragens 1981, p. 14).

The deficiences of positivism are summarised by Spragens as lying in three main areas: epistemological, ontological and anthropological. The epistemology of positivism is flawed because it is now recognised that certain, full, positive and absolute knowledge is unattainable.

> Epistemologically, we must recognize that there is no such thing as 'positive' knowledge. None of the formulations of the human mind in its attempts to comprehend reality amount to final, certain, fully explicit, demonstrable, 'clear and simple' truths. However successful, accurate, profound, persuasive, and fruitful these formulations may be, they are inescapably 'fiduciary' . . . They are . . . potentially corrigible to the core, subject to revision or rejection as circumstances change, and never wholly devoid of dependence on suppositions that are themselves indemonstrable.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 359)

One of the significant correlates of this new view of knowledge is ontological in character; that is, if knowledge is uncertain, contingent and continually subject to revision, the distinction made in liberal rationality between the 'knowing' subject and the 'real' world cannot be sustained. The distinction between 'knower' and 'known' that was at the heart of positive reason is collapsed. Thus,

> 'knowing' is neither the automatic functioning of a mechanism, nor is it the contemplation of a wholly transcendent subject. It is, instead, the cognitive power of living things who are striving to make their life and their world intelligible.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 353)

This conclusion also suggests an altered anthropological stance. Rather than the separation of man from the animal world and the claim to divine status on the basis of perfect knowledge, man must now be seen as a 'knowing subject' who is neither divine nor mechanical. As a consequence, man

> . . . is neither wholly free nor wholly programmed, neither wholly 'above' nature nor wholly submerged within it. He is part of nature, but he transcends it in that he can become conscious and reflect on both nature and himself. He is bound by his physicality, by his biology, and by his humanity, but he is a distinctive historical person, able to act on his environment as well as be subject to it.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 354)

However, despite these realisations two particular inheritances of liberal reason remain and have dominated much of the twentieth century. The first of these is that of technocratic rationality. As Spragens outlines it:

> The technocratic conception retains the belief that scientific, critical reason can ascertain principles for governing political and moral action, but it has departed from the earlier conception of liberal reason by regarding access to these truths as limited to a relatively small elite who have mastered the tools of critical reason.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 15)

The technocratic view tends, therefore, towards a politics which is the antithesis of early liberal ideals of equality and participation. Indeed, such a conception has produced a liberal reason which 'has turned out to be not very liberal, after all, and perhaps not very rational either' (Spragens 1981, p. 14).

The second fragment of liberal philosophy Spragens calls 'value non-cognitivist'. Despite the forbidding label the idea is fairly straightforward: by adhering to the tenets of 'positive' knowledge which demands that all

knowledge be derived from observation and connected by logic, this position emphasises the separation of fact from value and insists that values, and therefore moral, social and political principles, are simply inaccessible to reason: they cannot be 'known' in any positivist sense.

> The value noncognitivist conception of reason has retained the idea that true knowledge is certain, precise, and 'objective', but it too has departed from the earlier paradigm – by denying that political and moral principles are accessible to reason so conceived.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 15)

The result is, of course, the emergence of an irrationalism with regard to values and the denial of the possibility of discourse and practical reason concerning such issues. Thus these two inheritances of liberal philosophy end up by denying the very humanitarian principles espoused by the early liberals.

> The political implications of these alternative second-generation offspring of liberal reason . . . ran directly counter to the humane hopes and aspirations of that tradition. The early liberals' goal was to establish a political order that avoided the polar dangers of tyranny and anarchy. They looked forward to a politics of 'ordered liberty'. When their philosophical center gave way, the logical impetus of their heirs' ideas was away from this difficult but crucial middle ground and toward the feared extremes. By encouraging new versions of the fanaticism and skepticism that seventeenth-century rationalism had sought to transcend, the offspring of liberal reason have nourished the tyrannical and anarchistic derangements the early liberals hoped to put behind themselves forever.
>
> (Spragens 1981, p. 312)

The philosophical analysis provided by Spragens is echoed by the political analysis developed by Walzer in his examination of the emergence of neo-conservatism and the battle over the welfare state.

Walzer: Nervous liberals and the welfare state

According to Walzer the contemporary crisis of liberalism is heralded largely by the liberals themselves. Ironically, however, the inheritors of this radical political tradition call themselves neo-conservatives. What they wish to conserve, moreover, are the 'traditional' values and sources of institutional authority that the doctrine of liberalism itself has helped to undermine. As Walzer suggests, although 'our own neoconservatives express a neo-sense of crisis and loss . . . [simultaneously] . . . they are committed to the arrangements and processes that cause the tranformations they bewail' (1980, pp. 92–3).

This irony, evident in the previous analysis of the work of Crozier and Spragens, is present in much of the work of those whom Walzer calls the 'nervous liberals'. In his review of Peter Steinfels's (1979) book *The Neo-Conservatives*, Walzer points to the 'disturbing combination of insight and hysteria expressed in the writings of ['nervous liberals' such as] Irving Kristol, Robert Nisbet, Aaron Wildavsky, Samuel Huntington, Daniel Moynihan, S. M. Lispet, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Bell' (Walzer 1980, p. 94). These neo-conservatives suggest, according to Walzer and Steinfels, that

> The crisis is first of all a collapse of authority in governments, armies, universities, corporations, and churches. Old patterns of trust and deference have broken down. Political leaders, military officers, factory foremen cannot command obedience; professors cannot command respect. Alongside this is a radical loosening of social bonds in communities, neighbourhoods, and families ... Finally, there is a deep erosion of traditional values, not only deference and respect, but moderation, restraint, civility, work.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 93)

The result is that

> all this makes for a pervasive sense of disintegration. It creates a world—so we are told—of liberal decadence, of rootless, mobile, ambitious men and women, free (mostly) from legal and social constraint, free too from any kind of stable intimacy, pursuing happiness, demanding instant satisfaction: a world of graceless hedonists.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 93)

But the reduction of the power of authority and tradition, and the largely unfettered pursuit of individual happiness within the overall security provided by a minimal state are precisely the ideals to which liberalism historically is committed. The reality decried by the neo-conservatives in their defence of the great traditions of liberalism may well be an accurate description of the contemporary crisis but, as Walzer remarks,

> it is odd ... to represent that reality as the decline of liberal civilization. I would suggest instead that what we are living with today is the crisis of liberal triumph. Capitalism, the free market, governmental *laissez faire* in religion and culture, the pursuit of happiness: all these make powerfully for hedonism and social disintegration.
>
> (Walzer 1980, pp. 94–5)

The triumph of liberalism, as argued by Walzer, leads inevitably to the disintegration of traditional society and its cohesive institutions.

> For liberalism is above all a doctrine of liberation. It sets individuals loose from religious and ethnic communities, from guilds, parishes, neighborhoods. It abolishes all sorts of controls and agencies of control: ecclesiastical courts, cultural censorship, sumptuary laws, restraints on mobility, groups pressure, family bonds. It creates free men and women, tied together only by their contracts—and ruled, when contracts fail, by a distant and powerful state. It generates a radical individualism and then a radical competition among self-seeking individuals.
>
> (Walzer 1980, pp. 97–8)

The anarchistic hedonism that might be expected to follow from such trends is held in check, argues Walzer, by two countervailing forces. The first is that which Crozier also identifies: the residual legacy of traditional institutions and communities. These, though threatened by the emergence of liberalism, still act minimally to restrain its full development. In particular these institutions are still valued for their provision of mutual aid in times of trouble and because of their celebration of the ideal of community. Ironically,

> the neoconservatives ... value those old communities—ethnic groups, churches, neighborhoods, and families—within which mutual aid once worked ... [but] ... the basic dilemma remains. For they are committed

> at the same time to the market economy whose deepest trends undercut community and make state intervention necessary. To put the argument most simply: the market requires labor mobility, while mutual aid depends upon local rootedness. The more people move about, the more they live among strangers, the more they depend upon officials.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 99).

Such dependence leads to the creation of the second countervailing force: the welfare state. Walzer suggests that

> capitalism forces men and women to fight for the welfare state. It generates what is indeed a very high level of demand for protection against market vicissitudes and against entrepeneurial risk taking and for services once provided locally or not at all.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 99)

Ironically then, one of the singular results of the triumph of liberalism is a massively increased demand for state protection, not only against the prospect of foreign invasion and internal crime but also against the trauma produced by the *laissez-faire* economy and the operations of market capitalism associated with liberalism itself.

The range of services and support demanded of the welfare state is ever increasing. As well as protection from foreign enemies and internal crime, the state is now required to provide a full range of 'welfare' services: education, public health, relief for the aged, support for the unemployed, economic controls and guarantees for capital itself. The results of this expansion of the role of the state are not at all those predicted by liberal theory. Walzer points to four major effects.

Firstly, the role of the state has passed from the minimalist conception of the early liberals and become the subject of widespread political demands. It has

> ... generated a pervasive enlightenment about the functions of political organization. For the first time in history, large numbers of men and women know with absolute clarity that the state ought to be doing something for them.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 25)

Secondly, the expansion of the state into the provision of a wide range of welfare services has provided the state with a political legitimacy that is now widely recognised and accepted:

> ... the expansion of welfare production gives to the state a new and thoroughly rational legitimacy ... insofar as the state becomes a general welfare state, excluding nobody, it ... generates a legitimacy such as no previous political system has ever achieved.
>
> (Walzer 1980, pp. 26–7)

Thirdly, the development of the welfare state has led to a major expansion of the size of the public. That is, the scale of political organisation has enlarged to include more and more previously marginal or excluded groups.

> Liberal theorists and politicians have discovered that there are no necessary limits on the size of the public—so long as its members are conceived as

> individual recipients of benefits, so long as the problems of political communion, the sharing of a common life, are carefully avoided.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 27)

Fourthly, the development of the welfare state has increased the administrative role of the state at the expense of the political role. 'The ... tendency of successful welfare production is to decrease the importance of politics itself and to turn the state from a political order into an administrative agency' (Walzer 1980, p. 28). One result is that most individuals become related to the state and its administrative rather than its political structures. The mass of people is thus depoliticised.

It is this fourth characteristic of the welfare state that raises the most serious problems for liberalism, for the production of welfare on a near-universal basis involves the development of a near-universal administration.

> There can be no question that the development of welfare programs has involved (or required) an extraordinary expansion of the machinery of everyday state administration and therefore an increase in the degree, intensity, and detail of social control. In part, this increase stems directly from the progressive enlargement of bureaucratic systems and from improvements in the training and discipline of their personnel. But it is also closely related to the very nature of the utilitarian service state and to the character of the political struggles of the past century and a half.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 31)

These political struggles have centred on the creation of the welfare state as a bulwark against the exigencies of capitalism and then on the inclusion of more and more disadvantaged groups under the umbrella of that state. As the size and complexity of the state has increased, so the political activity of legislative action has been replaced by administrative regulation and bureaucratic bargaining.

Paradoxically this provision of welfare and support, which is supposedly liberating in its effects, brings with it the construction of an organisational framework which is committed to bureaucratic surveillance and social control. Thus, the individual who is increasingly dependent on the welfare state is increasingly bound to behave in ways that are sanctioned by that state. The result is that

> the citizen of the welfare state is free (and in many cases, newly enabled) to pursue happiness within the established social and economic system. He is not free to shape or reshape the system, for he has not seized and, except in minimal ways, he does not share political power.
>
> (Walzer 1980, p. 39).

It seems clear from the above analyses that, contrary to the intentions of the early liberals, the construction of a state that would protect them from both tyranny and anarchy has been frustrated: firstly, by the historical dominance of the free market by monopoly capitalism and, secondly by the emergence of the administrative state. The former denies economic equality; the latter, political power. Both, as we have seen, are outcomes of the flawed logic of liberalism. The problem of the state remains. Whose interest does it serve? How is it articulated with the economy and civil society?

So far we have presented two major answers to the questions regarding the purposes of the state. Firstly, it was argued that one of the primary intentions behind the early liberals attempts to create a minimal state was that of reducing the tyrannical power of absolute rulers. In the second place, it was argued that later attempts to create the welfare state were initiated in order to provide protection against the vicissitudes of market capitalism. There is, however, another argument. It originates with Marx and his analysis of the effects of capitalism in the creation of class society.

Liberalism, Marxism and the struggle for the state

Marx's redefinition of the concept of class to replace the idea of class *divisions* with the idea of class *relations* based upon the conflict between those who own and control the means of production and those who have only their labour to sell has brought about a whole new tradition of political, economic and social analysis which challenges many of the fundamental assumptions of liberalism. In this section, three arguments in this tradition will be presented. The first is a brief account of Marx's critique of liberalism; the second, an account of the differences between Weber and Lenin over the functions and future of state bureaucracies and their relation to systematic class oppression; and the third outlines the contemporary argument of Habermas in his analysis of the crisis tendencies of late capitalism.

Marx, class relations and the liberal state

Marx was in no doubt about whose interests were incorporated into the structure of the state. *The Communist Manifesto* declared that 'the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie' (Marx quoted in Held et al. 1983, p. 101). Such a declaration arose from an alternative conception of economic, political and social relations. While acknowledging the historical achievements of liberalism, Marx insisted that the single, isolated, competitive individuals of liberal theory were not, in fact, to be found in the reality of historical and political processes. Rather, human beings live in definite relations with each other, and their consciousness and their nature is determined by these relations.

The most crucial of these relations are *class* relations which, in turn, are determined by the relations of production. Both sets of relations are the result of the division of ownership of the means of production: that is, the bourgeoisie own the means of production (capital) and the proletariat own only their labour power. Class struggle arises from this division—especially over the allocation of surplus value (that is, the value of production generated by workers over and above their wages). Those who gain control of the means of production (the bourgeoisie) typically expropriate this surplus value and are thus able to live off the productive capacity of workers.

Moreover, this expropriated wealth also allows the bourgeoisie to become the dominant class socially and politically as well as economically.

From the perspective of this analysis of class society the role of the state can be approached in a somewhat different way from that proposed by the liberals. For instance, the liberal claim that the state should have a minimal role in public life, one restricted to the protection of public interests such as defence and the protection of 'life, liberty and estate', and that all else is properly left to the negotiation of private contact, is challenged by the Marxist analysis. Firstly the separation of 'public' from 'private' interest is challenged. Held summarises Marx and Engels's critique as follows:

> . . . the opposition between interests that are public and general, and those that are private and particular is, to a large extent, illusory. The state defends the 'public' or 'community' as if: classes did not exist; the relationship between classes was not exploitative; classes did not have fundamental differences of interest; these differences of interest did not define economic and political life.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 25)

It therefore follows that

> in treating everyone in the same way, according to principles which protect the freedom of individuals and defend their right to property, the state may act 'neutrally' while generating effects which are partial—sustaining the privileges of those with property.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 25)

The state's claim to neutrality therefore breaks down at precisely the most important point. The protection of private contract in fact protects and sustains the interests of the propertied class (the bourgeoisie) at the expense of the wage labourers (the proletariat). The liberal state is therefore not capable of acting in the (general) public interest through such a mechanism, but rather acts specifically in the interests of a particular, propertied, class. In the liberal state

> the key source of contemporary power—private ownership of the means of production—is ostensibly *depoliticized*; that is, treated as if it were not a proper subject of politics. The economy is regarded as non-political, in that the massive division between those who own and control the means of production, and those who must live by wage-labour, is regarded as the outcome of free private contracts, not a matter for the state. But by defending private property the state has already taken a side. The state, then, is not an independent structure or set of institutions above society, i.e. a 'public power' acting for 'the public'. On the contrary, it is deeply embedded in socio-economic relations and linked to particular interests.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 25)

Marx was, however, somewhat equivocal about the possible relationships between the state and class interests. In his early writings, such as his *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, Marx argues that the most important aspect of the state is the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy becomes a 'particular closed society within the state' (Marx 1970, p. 46) and develops what later came to be called a 'relative autonomy' from class interests. Marx, in these early writings, saw the bureaucracy becoming a law unto itself and the major site of the creation and debate of state aims.

> The bureaucracy asserts itself to be the final end of the state . . . The aims of the state are transformed into the aims of the bureaus, or the aims of the bureaus into the aims of the state. The bureaucracy is a circle from which no one can escape. Its hierachy is a hierachy of knowledge. The highest point entrusts the understanding of particulars to the lower echelons, whereas these, on the other hand, credit the highest with an understanding in the regard to the universal; and thus they deceive one another.
>
> (Marx 1970, pp. 46-7)

Similarly, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx emphasised the all-embracing power of the state developed by Bonaparte's regime and its relative independence (at least in the short term) from both civil society and the bourgeoisie in particular.

> This executive power, with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body . . . enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores.
>
> (Marx 1954, p. 104)

Under certain circumstances, such as those brought about under Bonaparte, Marx argues that the state can gain a relative independence from the bourgeoisie due to a particular balance of forces. The centralisation that was associated with the construction of such a state was not *in itself* a bad thing. Indeed, as McLellan (1973, pp. 245–6) points out, Marx argued that once it had been detached from the grip of feudalism and capitalism, central machinery could serve as an essential progressive factor.

Elsewhere, however, especially perhaps in *The Communist Manifesto* (written in conjunction with Frederick Engels), Marx argues that the state is a 'superstructure' based upon the economic and productive relations of the society and is therefore inevitably drawn into an alliance with those who own the means of production—the bourgeoisie. As Held suggests:

> . . . the state in capitalist society . . . cannot escape its dependence upon that society and, above all, upon those who own and control the productive process. Its dependence is revealed whenever the economy is beset by crises; for economic organizations of all kinds create the material resources on which the state apparatus survives. The state's overall policies have to be compatible in the long run with the objectives of manufacturers and traders, otherwise civil society and the stability of the state itself are jeopardized.
>
> (Held 1983, p. 28)

Marx's position is thus rather equivocal. In the first, early analysis the state is seen as somewhat independent of class interests and, under certain circumstances, as an arena where conflicts can be fought out. His later works, on the other hand, insist on the short-term nature of this independence and maintain that in the long run, under capitalism, the state will inevitably succumb to the economic interest of those who control the means of production. The argument over which position is most illuminating in the analysis of the state has been carried forward by recent Marxist scholarship with Miliband (1969), for instance, defending the first position and Poulantzas (1973) elaborating the second.

Marx was very successful in drawing attention to the growing importance of the state apparatus, that is, the panoply of experts hierachically

organised in the service and control of the state, the economy and civil society that had become so much part of capitalist society. The fundamental question raised by his analysis was that of the *independence* of this apparatus; that is, whether the state apparatus was an autonomous, neutral apparatus that could be put at the service of whatever dominant interest controlled the state (even the working class, where it gained power) or whether the state apparatus was a distinctively *capitalist* apparatus that was quite unsuitable for the service of any other (particularly working-class) interests.

The grounds for each of these alternative positions were set out in 1917 by two men writing from opposite sides of Europe. One was Vladimir Lenin who was working on a tract optimistically called *The State and Revolution* and the other was Max Weber who was writing an academic treatise called (equally optimistically) *Parliament and Government in a Reconstructed Germany*.

Lenin and Weber on bureaucracy and the state

Lenin took the position that the bureaucratic state apparatus was essentially a creature of capitalism, serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie and totally unsuited to the forms of organisation required by the working class following the revolution. He was quite unequivocal in this belief.

> The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable . . . The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another . . . The state is a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class.
>
> (Lenin quoted in Wright 1978, p. 195)

This being so, it follows that in a capitalist state the bourgeoisie rules over the suppressed proletariat, while in a socialist state the converse applies. The democratic republican politics associated with capitalist societies therefore provide little more than a superficial legitimation of the ruling capitalist class. In fact,

> a democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell . . . it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.
>
> (Lenin quoted in Wright 1978, p. 196)

Lenin was, in fact, quite contemptuous of the mystification that legitimated bourgeois control via the forms of parliamentary government.

> Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth – in these countries the real business of 'state' is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the 'common people'.
>
> (Lenin quoted in Wright 1978, pp. 196-7)

The importance of the bureaucracy is that it is the primary location of decision making in the bourgeois state. It is the primary mechanism through which the bourgeoisie rules. In this respect it is both dependent on and

depended on by the bourgeoisie. In conjunction with the expansion of the military it is the primary mechanism of domination of the working class. In addition, the structural hierachisation of bureaucracy and the exclusive nature of its mechanisms of recruitment reinforce the mutual dependency of the ruling class and the bureaucracy and also make mass participation impossible.

It follows, therefore, that the realisation of a socialist society is in part dependent on the destruction of bureaucracy which must be accomplished before the creation of a truly democratic state can take place. This agenda cannot be accomplished overnight for

> abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureauracy—this is not a utopia ...
>
> (Lenin quoted in Wright 1978, p. 201).

Weber, on the other hand, was convinced that the increasing complexity of modern societies made the further development of bureaucracy inevitable. This was not because of any particular political superiority, but because of the technical superiority of bureaucracy over any other form of complex organisation

> The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form.
>
> (Weber 1978, p. 973)

Because of this superiority the growth of bureaucracy inevitably brings an increase in the power of the bureaucrats. Outsiders are in a weak position because of their inadequate access to the knowledge and files of the bureaucracy: they simply cannot be as well informed. This raises a major problem for Weber. How, he asks, in the face of this inevitable growth of bureaucratic power, can the bureaucracy be kept in check?

> In view of the growing indispensability of the state bureaucracy and its corresponding increase in power, how can there be any guarantee that any powers will remain which can check or effectively control the tremendous influence of this stratum?
>
> (Weber 1978, p. 1403)

The answer, Weber suggests, is the establishment of strong political control without which the tendency of the bureaucracy would increasingly be towards ineffective response to unanticipated crises and the maximisation of the influence of big capitalists.

Weber argued that, despite its virtues, bureaucracy was incapable of dealing with political problems arising from conflict: '... the facts themselves provoke the recognition which nobody can truthfully deny: That bureaucracy failed *completely* whenever it was expected to deal with *political*

problems' (Weber 1978, p. 1417). Effective leadership could only be provided, therefore, by the establishment of a strong and effective parliament in which political conflicts between status groups could be fought out. While recognising, with Marx, that class differences were important in the conflicts of such status groups, Weber argued that other social divisions, such as religion, ethnicity, location and nationalism, are also important elements in the battles for political power. This position has been extended by contemporary pluralists such as Lindblom (1977), Dahl (1975) and Skocpol (1979) into a thesis that argues for open competition between innumerable social groups, each of which has some advantage that can be deployed, singly or in unison with other minority groups, to gain a democratic advantage. Although Weber's analysis formed the foundation for the later pluralist position he was, himself, more concerned with the role of parliament in developing the capacity for strong leadership and with ensuring that the bureaucracy was accountable to parliament through such devices as parliamentary inquiries.

What, then, is to be said of Lenin's and Weber's analyses of the state and bureaucracy?

Weber's analysis of the relationship between the development of the bureaucracy and the struggle for control of the state focuses very much on the technical machinery of organisation and largely excludes or minimises the relationship between such developments and the growth of class conflict in capitalist society.

Lenin, on the other hand, has a well-developed sense of the class struggle, but an underdeveloped analysis of bureaucracy which is condemned simply because of its apparent association with capitalist society. While this may be generally true—and even Weber admits to the association, though he points out that bureaucratic forms of organisation pre-date capitalism—argument by association does not constitute a valid criticism of bureaucracy as such. The 'withering away of the state' does not seem a likely occurrence. Moreover, Lenin does not develop an adequate explanation of the alternative procedures through which, after the revolution, the soviets will maintain control over the purely technical expertise of specialists, who he agrees are a necessary part of a complex state.

We are left, then, in something of a quandary by these analyses. It can be agreed, perhaps, that the bureaucracy of the modern state is the most powerful part of the state apparatus, far exceeding anything that was imagined by early liberals. It can also be agreed that competition between the economic interests of differing classes provides a basic division within the modern state. It may also be agreed that the state is the arena within which various conflicts resulting from these tensions are played out. But the relations between these elements is still unclear, as is their relation to the crisis of liberal democracy identified in our earlier discussion. We still need an adequate explanation of the relationships between economy, state and civil society, and of the crises to which these relationships are prone. One of the major contemporary attempts to address the relations between

these issues has been that of Jurgen Habermas who has focused his analysis on what he calls the crisis of the state.

Habermas and the crisis of the state

Marx was the first to develop a thorough sociological concept of system crisis but, as Habermas points out, the notion of crisis is common to both medical and dramaturgical traditions. In medicine the notion of crisis implies both an objective situation (the fever consequent upon a contagious disease, for instance) and a subjective consciousness on the part of the patient from which he cannot escape until the crisis is resolved. Again, in the dramaturgical tradition of classical aesthetics

> . . . crisis signifies the turning point of the fateful process which, although fully objective, does not simply break in from the outside. There is a contradiction expressed in the catastrophic culmination of a conflict of action, and that contradiction is inherent in the very structure of the system of action and in the personality system of the characters. Fate is revealed in conflicting norms that destroy the identities of the characters unless they in turn manage to regain their freedom by smashing the mythical power of fate.
>
> (Habermas 1973, p. 644)

While Marx saw the crisis tendencies of capitalism as located within the economic system, Habermas argues that the conditions of 'late' capitalism are somewhat different from those of the 'classical' capitalism analysed so perceptively by Marx. In particular Habermas identifies four developments as of crucial importance. These are the growth of large-scale economic and commercial organisations; the increasing interdependence of science, technology and industry; the increasing interdependence of state and society; and the increasing application of instrumental reason (concerned with the relationship between the adequacy of means in achieving predetermined goals) to more and more areas of life (Habermas 1971). These developments, he argues, have led to a situation quite different from that analysed by Marx in that they have changed the relationship of economics and politics: 'politics is no longer *only* a phenomenon of the superstructure' (Habermas 1971, p. 101). That is to say, the state is no longer simply built on the economic foundations of the market but is actively involved in the process of capital accumulation that is at the heart of capitalist society.

The involvement of the state in the attempt to reduce the impact of cyclical market crises and to support the continued process of capital accumulation has pervasive consequences. The immediate consequence is a huge growth in state agencies—that is, in the political-administrative system. The function of these agencies is twofold.

Firstly, regulation and intervention is required in order to ensure the continuance of the accumulation process. In many cases this will mean the direct involvement of the state in the production process through such mechanisms as negotiating bilateral and multilateral trade agreements on a nation-to-nation basis; engaging in unproductive consumption in, for instance, armaments and space technology; providing an improved infrastructure which reduces the direct costs of production (roads, railways,

health, education, regional planning, etc); increasing the production of scientific and technical knowledge through the establishment of research centres, etc.; increasing the productivity of labour through improved education and vocational training; and paying the social costs of private production such as unemployment, ecological damage, welfare etc. These demands have led to a massive increase in the size and influence of the state apparatus.

Secondly, the state must act to maintain the mass support of the people. In order for the rules and regulations of the system to be effective and observed by the people as a whole, the state must be able to convince the public that the process by which the rules are defined is democratic and that the system as a whole is guided by the principles of equality, justice and freedom. The difficulty here is, as Marx pointed out, that capitalist societies are based upon an inherently *unequal* power relationship. As a result

> . . . the capitalist state must act to support the accumulation process and at the same time act, if it is to protect its image as fair and just, to conceal what it is doing.
>
> (Held 1982, p. 184)

But, as the state and its administrative system expands into more and more areas of activity that were traditionally defined as private, and as the state attempts to engage in rational global planning, the processes of administration become transparent to increasing numbers of the public. Where previously the workings of the market were obscure and mystical—depending on the operation of the invisible hand—the intervention of the state makes such operations both rational and subject to control (at least in principle). As Habermas suggests:

> Administrative planning creates a universal compulsion for justification toward a sphere that was actually distinguished by the power of self-legitimation . . . administrative planning has unintentional effects of disquieting and publicizing. These effects weaken the justification potential of traditions that have been forced out of their natural condition. Once they are no longer indisputable, their demands for validity can be stabilized only by way of discourse. Thus, the forcible shift of things that have been culturally taken for granted further politicizes areas of life that previously could be assigned to the private domain.
>
> (Habermas 1973, p. 658)

The result of the intervention process is that the 'hand of the state' becomes increasingly visible and, as the visibility increases, so do the demands for greater consultation, participation and recognition of interests. This development itself creates further demands for recognition and participation by more groups within the society, thus placing great strain on the administrative processes of the state. Such strain has the potential for the precipitation of a rationality crisis where the administrative machinery fails to deliver the required quantity of rational decisions.

If the administrative system cannot meet these demands within the boundaries of what is recognised as legitimate state activity then the administrative or 'rationality' crisis expands into a 'legitimation' crisis precipitated by the withdrawal of mass loyalty on the part of the public. The fundamental

difficulty, however, is that the state in capitalist society must *always* act to further the process of capital accumulation; that is, to support the process of extracting the maximum of surplus value from workers and concentrating it in the hands of capitalists. This is inherently a power relationship which acts unfairly, undemocratically and unjustly to support the interests of one class against the other. As Habermas suggests 'in the final analysis . . . *class structure* is the source of the legitimation deficit' (1976, p. 73).

Held summarises the political difficulties precipitated by this problem:

> The state must secure the loyalty of one class while systematically acting to the advantage of another. As the state's activity expands and its role in controlling social reality becomes more transparent, there is a greater danger that this asymmetrical relation will be exposed. Such exposure would only increase demands on the system. The state can ignore these demands only at the peril of further demonstrating its non-democratic nature.
>
> (Held 1982, p. 184)

Habermas argues that such rationality and legitimation crises may well develop as a consequence of the state's attempt to deal with the continued economic crises involved in capital accumulation. They do not *necessarily* develop but are likely to do so where there is a breakdown of the motivation required to sustain mass loyalty to the state.

Currently, Habermas argues, such motivation is sustained by two elements. Firstly, there are the pre-capitalist elements such as the familial, religious, institutional structures and ethics which still have a residual (but declining) influence in capitalist society. Secondly, there are the bourgeois elements of possessive individualism and utilitarianism that are our inheritance from the traditions of liberalism.

Habermas argues that each of these two major sources of motivation is currently under threat. Firstly, the religious, cultural systems of meaning inherent in pre-capitalist social structures are succumbing to the seemingly inevitable processes of rationalisation; that is, as more and more areas of social life become subject to the scientific–technical processes of planning and co-ordination, the explanations and meaning given to events by traditional institutions lose their power to convince the public of their capacity to shape the future. As they lose their place in the technical management of human affairs their *moral* influence also declines, because morality is seen more and more as subjective and relative.

The role of the state in socio-technical, rational planning means also that

> . . . the state cannot simply take over the cultural system and that, in fact, the expansion of areas for state planning creates problems for things that are culturally taken for granted. 'Meaning' is an increasingly scarce resource.
>
> (Habermas 1973, p. 659)

Secondly, the inherited doctrines of liberalism – especially competitive individualism and utilitarianism – are also losing their power to legitimate and justify the actions of the state. Ideas of continuous competition and the pursuit of achievement are increasingly losing ground as people begin to recognise that the promised rewards are not distributed either according to market mechanisms or according to precepts of justice, fairness and equality: 'ever since the general public realized that social violence

is practiced in the forms of exchange, the market has been losing its credibility as a mechanism for distributing rewards based on performance' (Habermas 1973, p. 661). Moreover, the utilitarian doctrine of the public good being no more than the sum of private good is also being eroded, as the state is forced more and more into the socialising of the costs of urban life—of redressing what Galbraith refers to as 'conditions of private affluence and public squalor'.

Habermas argues that an alternative *universalistic* ethic is emerging in place of these traditional liberal virtues which are no longer adequate as a basis for the production of motivation. On the basis of his examination of the students' and women's movements, he argues that there is a new level of consciousness which involves an alternative set of motivational norms. These are founded on the emergence of a communicative ethic which demands discourse over the nature and justification of social realities. Motivation under such circumstances depends on the principle of democratisation; that is, a new principle of organisation is demanded in order to retain mass loyalty and resolve the emerging motivational crisis. If such a principle is not adopted, and if the current system continues to lose its power to buy mass loyalty through the provision of welfare services while maintaining the processes of capital accumulation, then the system will not find sufficient motivation for its maintenance. Held summarises the argument:

> Habermas's conclusion, then, is that, given its logic of crises tendencies, organised capitalism cannot maintain its present form. If Habermas's argument is correct, then capitalism will either evolve into a kind of 'Brave New World' or it will have to overcome its underlying class contradiction. To do the latter would mean the adoption of a new principle of organisation. Such a principle would involve a universalistic morality embedded in a system of participatory democracy, i.e. an opportunity for discursive will-formation.
>
> (Held 1982, p. 187)

Such a process of democratisation would, suggests Habermas, have two probable effects:

> I am of the opinion that a greater democratization of our societies, in the sense of a democratization of current decision making, and joint involvement in decisions previously taken either privately or administratively, through more discursive processes of formation of the collective will . . . could lead to a loss of efficiency.
>
> (Habermas 1979, p. 81)

This, however, is not the overriding concern.

> On the other hand I am convinced that we want democratization not so much in order to improve the efficiency of the economy as to change the *structures* of power: and in the second place to set in motion ways of defining collective goals that merely administrative or power-oriented decisions would lead astray or cripple.
>
> (Habermas 1979, p. 81)

These conclusions are, interestingly enough, clearly related to the same strand of hermeneutics which influenced Rousseau's advocacy of par-

ticipatory democracy; that is, they draw on a particularly European tradition in epistemology and ontology.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis of the traditions of liberalism, the challenge of Marxist analysis and the crisis tendencies of the contemporary state has clearly demonstrated the increasing importance of public administration in the struggle for the state. Such an analysis also suggests that the resolution of the crisis tendencies that we have noted as an apparently inevitable outcome of the traditions of liberalism must focus on the political-administrative processes of our society. Moreover, if the crisis of the state is essentially a result of the increased administrative structure of the state's activity which makes decision making transparent and the class contradictions of capitalism patent, then a closer study of the processes of public administration should both exhibit these crises and suggest mechanisms for their resolution which avoid the production of a 'Brave New World'. It is to such an analysis that the accompanying monograph, *Public Administration and the Crisis of the State*, directs attention.

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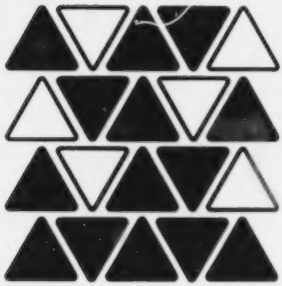
Readings



1

Nervous liberals

Michael Walzer

I

A genuine conservatism expresses a sense of crisis and imminent or actual loss. Its tone is perfectly caught in the opening lines of Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, where Hooker explains his purpose in writing: "Though for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity may know that we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream. . . ."[1] And, more stridently, in the gothic prose of Edmund Burke: "But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more shall we behold . . ." etc.[2]

Our own neoconservatives express a neo-sense of crisis and loss. Though they sometimes write in the gothic mode, they cannot approach Burke's wholeheartedness. For they themselves stand in the ranks of the economists and calculators.

A review of Peter Steinfels, *The Neo-Conservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1979).

[1] *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, preface.

[2] *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (Harmondsworth, England, 1968), p. 170.

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They are committed to the arrangements and processes that cause the transformations they bewail. As Peter Steinfels writes in his excellent study of neoconservative thought, they live with a "basic dilemma": "The institutions they wish to conserve are to no small extent the institutions that have made the task of conservation so necessary and so difficult."

What is the nature of the "crisis" that American neoconservatives have been complaining about? Among the writers Steinfels considers, the crisis is differently described and with very different degrees of analytical rigor. I can only suggest a rough and quick summary. Steinfels provides a careful analysis, skeptical, but always true, I think, to the best of their arguments. The crisis is first of all a collapse of authority in governments, armies, universities, corporations, and churches. Old patterns of trust and deference have broken down. Political leaders, military officers, factory foremen cannot command obedience; professors cannot command respect. Alongside this is a radical loosening of social bonds in communities, neighborhoods, and families—perhaps best summed up in the common metaphor of "splitting." Once only Protestant sects and radical political movements split. Now families split, couples split, individuals split. Splitting is the ordinary and casual way of breaking up and taking one's leave, and leave taking is one of the more remarkable freedoms of contemporary society.

Finally, there is a deep erosion of traditional values, not only deference and respect, but moderation, restraint, civility, work. All this makes for a pervasive sense of disintegration. It creates a world—so we are told—of liberal decadence, of rootless, mobile, ambitious men and women, free (mostly) from legal and social constraint, free too from any kind of stable intimacy, pursuing happiness, demanding instant satisfaction: a world of graceless hedonists.

This picture obviously depends upon implicit comparisons with some older and different social order and, as Steinfels makes clear, the precise historical reference points are rarely

given. So the picture is crudely drawn, a disturbing combination of insight and hysteria. As expressed in the writings of Irving Kristol, Robert Nisbet, Aaron Wildavsky, Samuel Huntington, Daniel Moynihan, S. M. Lipset, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Bell—professors or former professors all—it has to my mind an initial implausibility. It relies too heavily on the experience of the late sixties and hardly at all on the experience of the late seventies. The authority of presidents, in the aftermath of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Watergate, may still be precarious, and understandably so, but the authority of professors seems fully restored. That probably has more to do with the economy than with our own virtue or pedagogical success. Still, students have never in the past twenty years been as deferential as they are today. Conservatives are supposed to dwell happily in the past; the present is torment for them. Our neoconservatives dwell miserably in the past, reliving every undergraduate outrage; the present might be a relief.

But let us accept their vision, or at least take it seriously. That is Steinfels's strategy, and it is surely right. These neoconservatives are eminent scholars and intellectuals; they are widely read (because they have interesting things to say); they have ready access to foundations and government agencies. Though they differ among themselves in ways I mostly won't be able to explain in this review, they constitute a common and increasingly influential current of opinion. Steinfels claims that they have created at last that "serious and intelligent conservatism that America has lacked, and whose absence has been roundly lamented by the American Left." Though the adjectives are right, the claim is dubious, for these writers, on Steinfels's own reading, have not resolved the basic dilemma of conservative thought; nor are they genuinely committed to the world that is passing away. Still, their argument is worth pursuing. Even if we don't experience the contemporary crisis with the intensity conveyed in their essays and books, we do after all have intimations of its reality.

It is odd, however, to represent that reality as the decline of

liberal civilization. I would suggest instead that what we are living with today is the crisis of liberal triumph. Capitalism, the free market, governmental *laissez faire* in religion and culture, the pursuit of happiness: all these make powerfully for hedonism and social disintegration. Or, in different words, they open the way for individual men and women to seek satisfaction wherever they can find it; they clear away the ancient barriers of political repression, economic scarcity, and social deference. But the effects of all this are revealed only gradually over decades, even centuries. Today, we are beginning to sense their full significance.

"The foundation of any liberal society," Bell has written, "is the willingness of all groups to compromise private ends for the public interest."[3] Surely that is wrong; at least, it is not what leading liberal theorists have told us. The root conviction of liberal thought is that the uninhibited pursuit of private ends (subject only to minimal legal controls) will produce the greatest good of the greatest number, and hence that every restraint on that pursuit is presumptively wrong. Individuals and groups compromise with one another, striking bargains, trying to increase or "maximize" private interest. But they don't compromise for the sake of the public interest, because the public interest—until it was resurrected as *The Public Interest*—was not thought to be anything more than the sum of private interests. From this maximizing game, however, large numbers of men and women, the majority of men and virtually all women, were once excluded. They were too poor, too weak, too frightened. It is this exclusion, I suspect, that figures in neoconservative writing as the moderation and civility of times gone by. And what is called hedonism is in reality the end of that exclusion as a result, largely, of economic expansion, mass affluence, and a "liberating" politics that does little more than exploit the deepest meanings of *laissez faire*.

Hedonism certainly isn't new. One has only to think of

[3] "The Public Household," in *The Public Interest*, no. 37 (Fall 1974), p. 46.

America in the gilded age or in the 1920s. Nor is it newly cut loose, as neoconservative writers frequently suggest, from the Protestant ethic. If one wants to understand the consumption habits of earlier Americans, one would probably do better to read Veblen than Max Weber. But it is true, and important, that hedonism as a way of life is newly available outside the upper classes. More people pursue happiness, and they pursue it more aggressively, than ever before. Workers, blacks, women, homosexuals: everyone is running. Everyone's entitled. It makes for a lot of jostling, but isn't this the fulfillment of the liberal dream? No one reading Hobbes and Locke, and foreseeing the economic expansion of the years since they wrote, would be surprised. And yet how much we miss those old social gospel Christians, populist reformers, socialist agitators, who forgot themselves and pursued other people's happiness! And how much our neoconservative colleagues miss all those men and women who never realized that they had a right to run!

What is true in the economy is also true in politics. "The effective operation of a democratic political system," writes Samuel Huntington, ". . . requires some measure of apathy and non-involvement on the part of some individuals and groups. In the past, every democracy has had a marginal population, of greater or lesser size, which has not participated in politics." This marginality, "inherently undemocratic," is nonetheless one of the conditions of democratic success—or at least of governmental effectiveness.[1] The argument might be put more baldly. In the past, government was able to respond effectively to the demands of the powerful and the well-organized, but it is threatened (and authority and civilization with it) when demand is universalized, when everyone gets into the political act. Yet liberal democracy tends toward universality of exactly that sort. What is to be done?

A similar story can be told about religious life. *Laissez faire* in religion works wonderfully when it is a matter of creating a

[1] "The Democratic Distemper," in Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol, eds., *The American Commonwealth: 1976* (New York, 1976), p. 37.

structure within which well-established creeds, with well-disciplined adherents, coexist. But as the established religions slowly fade away (in an atmosphere of radical disestablishment, hostile to institutional pretensions), they are replaced by a proliferation of sects and cults, and the stability of the general structure is strained. All sorts of people want to be saved, right now, and as there are many paths to the house of the Lord, so there are many hawkers selling maps. Contemporary sectarianism is simply the latest product of the market. Its leaders combine charisma and hustle, and one can read in their activities all the signs of entrepreneurial energy and, sometimes at least, of consumer satisfaction. Watching the Hare Krishna people on the streets of New York or Cambridge, I probably have feelings very similar to those of a seventeenth-century Puritan minister (the neoconservatives probably feel like Anglicans) listening to a Ranter or a Fifth-Monarchy man. But I still value religious freedom—as do the neoconservatives. And so again: what is to be done?

II

In an impressive sentence, Irving Kristol has written that bourgeois society lived for years off "the accumulated capital of traditional religion and traditional moral philosophy"—capital it did not, as Steinfels emphasizes, effectively renew. The point can be generalized. Liberalism more largely, for all its achievements, or as a kind of necessary constraint on those achievements, has been parasitic not only on older values but also and more importantly on older institutions and communities. And these latter it has progressively undermined. For liberalism is above all a doctrine of liberation. It sets individuals loose from religious and ethnic communities, from guilds, parishes, neighborhoods. It abolishes all sorts of controls and agencies of control: ecclesiastical courts, cultural censorship,

sumptuary laws, restraints on mobility, group pressure, family bonds. It creates free men and women, tied together only by their contracts—and ruled, when contracts fail, by a distant and powerful state. It generates a radical individualism and then a radical competition among self-seeking individuals.

What made liberalism endurable for all these years was the fact that the individualism it generated was always imperfect, tempered by older restraints and loyalties, by stable patterns of local, ethnic, religious, or class relationships. An untempered liberalism would be unendurable. That is the crisis the neoconservatives evoke: the triumph of liberalism over its historical restraints. And that is a triumph they both endorse and lament. A small illustration: Kristol writes angrily that in the contemporary world, "to see something on television is to feel entitled to it." "He nowise hints," Steinfels comments, "that this is exactly the reaction that someone has intended, in fact spent considerable sums of money to create." Free men and women, without strong roots in indigenous cultures, are open to that sort of "creativity," and liberalism by itself offers no protection against it. Do the neoconservatives propose to protect us? Though Kristol has urged the censorship of pornography—one more product of the free market—he has not, so far as I know, urged the censorship of advertising. Still, he is uneasy with the consequences of freedom.

Neoconservatives are nervous liberals, and what they are nervous about is liberalism. They despair of liberation, but they are liberals still, with whatever longing for older values. They remind me of a sentence about Machiavelli hastily scrawled in an undergraduate's blue book: "Machiavelli stood with one foot in the Middle Ages, while with the other he saluted the rising star of the Renaissance." That is the way I think of Irving Kristol. He stands with one foot firmly planted in the market, while with the other he salutes the fading values of an organic society. It is an awkward position.

It is also, intellectually and politically, a puzzling position. In recent years, the main tendency of neoconservative writing

has been a critique of state intervention in the economy and of expanded welfare programs of the Great Society sort. In magazine articles, foundation studies, and *Wall Street Journal* editorials, we are repeatedly shown public officials struggling to respond to the cacophony of demand generated by mass democracy, struggling to do (badly) for men and women what they once did (better) for themselves and one another. Like Prince Kropotkin, the neoconservatives dislike the state (unlike the Prince, not the police) and they believe in mutual aid. They value those old communities—ethnic groups, churches, neighborhoods, and families—within which mutual aid once worked. Or supposedly worked: once again, I don't know the historical reference of the argument. In any case, the basic dilemma remains. For they are committed at the same time to the market economy whose deepest trends undercut community and make state intervention necessary. To put the argument most simply: the market requires labor mobility, while mutual aid depends upon local rootedness. The more people move about, the more they live among strangers, the more they depend upon officials.

Today, that dependency is genuine and pervasive. Capitalism forces men and women to fight for the welfare state. It generates what is indeed a very high level of demand for protection against market vicissitudes and against entrepreneurial risk taking and for services once provided locally or not at all. It is a common argument among neoconservatives that this demand "overloads" the welfare system, which cannot provide the protection and services people have come to expect. Trapped by the necessities of electoral and pressure group politics, political leaders promise more and more social goods. In office, inevitably, they fail to deliver; popular respect for government declines; the crisis deepens. Perhaps this view expresses some ultimate truth about the welfare system. With Steinfels, I am inclined to doubt that it expresses any immediate truth. It justifies, as he says, a politics that holds too quickly and without sufficient reason that minimal decency in,

say, health and housing is simply beyond the reach of our (discredited) officials.

But it is not a part of Steinfels's project to pursue such disagreements in detail. He is concerned with exposition and analysis. Suppose, then, that the overload argument is right. The long-term effect of liberalism (and capitalism and democracy) is that too many people want too much too quickly. What follows? It isn't possible to drive individuals and groups back into an older condition of passivity, deference, and marginality. I sometimes detect a hankering after the days of the "respectable poor" among the neoconservatives, but the repression that would be necessary to bring those days back is not a part of their programs. These are liberals still, however nervous. Indeed, it is not clear that there is a coherent program either for interdicting overload or for coping with it.

At this point, articles in *The Public Interest*, a journal whose editors boast of their hardheadedness, turn preachy. "Less marginality on the part of some groups," writes Huntington, "needs to be replaced by more self-restraint on the part of all groups."[5] Yes, indeed. But what is going to persuade all those individual and collective selves to set limits on their demands? What sets of beliefs, what political movements, operating within what sorts of institutional structures? Unless answers are provided for questions like these, answers that give some bite to the crucial phrase in Huntington's sentence—"on the part of *all* groups"—neoconservatism is likely to collapse, as Steinfels writes, into "the legitimating and lubricating ideology of an oligarchic America . . . where great inequalities are rationalized by straitened circumstances. . . ."

Among neoconservative writers, Daniel Bell comes closest to dealing with these questions—though he deals with them in a way that raises doubts about his own conservatism. In fact, he has kept his intellectual distance; it is Steinfels who makes the connection, arguing for the primacy within the corpus of

[5] "Democratic Distemper," p. 37.

Bell's work of his attack on modern culture and mass hedonism. Certainly, Bell is as worried as his friends on *The Public Interest* are about the loss of *civitas*, "that spontaneous willingness . . . to forgo the temptations of private enrichment at the expense of the public weal," and he is as loathe as they are to tell us when it was that such temptations were actually forgone.

Almost alone among neoconservatives, however, Bell is prepared to recognize that *civitas* depends upon a pervasive sense of equity and that equity in America today requires greater equality and a more effective welfare state. When Bell calls himself "a socialist in economics," he is marking a difference between his own work and that of his friends that is worth stressing. Steinfels points out that Bell's socialism is rarely reflected in his writing on economic institutions; it is programmatically thin; and it is accompanied by reiterated expressions of hostility toward egalitarian radicals. But his argument for "the public household" does at least suggest some way of reincorporating liberal values in new communal structures. The alternative is to make a politics out of nervousness itself, a crackling, defensive, angry, unfocused politics—as much of neoconservatism is.

III

Equality is a specter that haunts the neoconservative mind, and Steinfels writes about the haunting with great insight in what is probably the strongest chapter of his book. Like him, I have some difficulty identifying the object which the specter is supposed to represent. Is it the New Left, long gone, or the civil rights movement, or the black and feminist campaigns for affirmative action? All these taken together have hardly carried us very far (any distance at all?) toward that "equality of outcomes" which Nisbet, Kristol, Glazer, Bell too, regard as the clear and present danger of contemporary political life. These

writers put themselves forward as defenders of meritocracy (Bell, characteristically, of a "just meritocracy," within which those on top cannot "convert their authority positions into large, discrepant, material and social advantages over others," a qualification for which he should probably be denounced in *Commentary*). But if their goal is "a career open to merit," then surely they must sense that real progress has been made in that direction in the past several decades, and not through their efforts. The advance has largely been forced by the egalitarians they attack. And most of them, the mainstream of blacks and women certainly, would be more than happy with a genuine meritocracy.

But would the neoconservatives be happy with that? Who are the meritocrats anyway but rootless, ambitious men and women, cut loose from traditional communities, upwardly bound, focused on the state? And isn't it these people, unsure of their present position and their final destination, full of status anxieties, envious of older elites and established wealth, who—according to neoconservative polemics—carry in their hearts and minds the germs of a radical egalitarianism? Here again is the neoconservative dilemma. As these writers yearn for lost communities, so they yearn for lost hierarchies and stable establishments. How else can authority regain its luster except by being embodied in a class of men (and women too, if necessary) confident of their place, trained for power and public service, secure against competitors? But meritocracy undermines all such classes. Whether it is happiness that is being pursued, or position and office, the scramble that results leaves no one secure or confident. All the neoconservatives are meritocrats in practice as well as in theory. They have earned their places in academic and political life. But they are uneasy with their fellows. This uneasiness is expressed in the virtually incoherent doctrine of the "new class."

Steinfels devotes three chapters to his strange argument that figures so largely in neoconservative (and also in neo-Marxist) thought. The subject is important because it is in writing about

the "new class" that neoconservatives give us the clearest sense of who they think they are and who they think their enemies are. Unfortunately for social analysis, both they and their enemies seem to belong to the "new class"—which is therefore described, alternately, with warm affection and deep hostility. The political universe of neoconservatism is narrow: it consists of students, professionals, technocrats, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. The old bourgeoisie is gone, along with liberal civilization; the workers are summoned up only when it is necessary to remind them of the importance of wage restraint. Politics, as Steinfels writes, is a "war for the new class." He might have added, it is a civil war.

Most simply, the "new class" consists of men and women with technical or intellectual skills who sell their services and hold jobs—contrasted with an older middle and upper class of men and women with capital who own businesses and an older working class of men and women who have only their labor power to sell. The "new class" is in fact not new, but it has expanded at an extraordinary pace in recent decades and is still growing. Because its members are job-holders, Marxist writers have wondered whether they might not be proletarianized, assimilated into the ranks of the skilled workers. Because they control, manage, and advise other people, conservative writers view them as potential (if currently unreliable) recruits for a new Establishment. Since the "new class" is fairly heterogeneous in character, both these views may be right; or neither. The term does not yet evoke a shared social identity or political position. In neoconservative argument it is used with remarkable freedom, and can be used freely because it isn't connected with any developed political sociology.

Still Steinfels argues persuasively that neoconservative thought is best understood as an ideology for the "new class." It is certainly true that neoconservative writers believe that the "new class" needs an ideology. Its members are *arrivistes*, but they have not arrived by making money, and so they have not been disciplined by the free-for-all of the market. They have

no stake in the country, but only in their own persons. They lack understanding and regard for capital. They are as unsure of their own authority as they are of the authority of their predecessors. "Relative to other segments of society," writes Steinfels, "the 'new class' is thin-skinned about legitimacy, high-strung, liable to a 'case of the nerves.'"

Moynihan adds that its members are not aggressive enough in defense of their own interests and of the system within which those interests are pursued. "I would suggest," he told a group of Harvard alumni in 1976, "that a liberal culture does indeed succeed in breeding aggression out of its privileged classes and that after a period in which this enriches the culture, it begins to deplete it." Considering Moynihan himself, a prototypical member of the new class, and his associates in several recent administrations, I don't quite see where the problem of insufficient aggression lies.

The real danger, according to neoconservative writers such as Kristol and Robert Nisbet, is that the "new class" will provide political and social support for a kind of statist egalitarianism. Egged on by radical intellectuals, its members will rally to a "new politics" of leveling, the crucial effect of which will be to enhance the power of the federal bureaucracy, manned by themselves. In other words, they will pursue their own interests (aggressively?). And so they have to be initiated into the complexities of American pluralism. Above all, they have to be taught (through the efforts of foundations like the American Enterprise Institute) to accommodate themselves to the traditional centers of economic power. What the "new class" requires is an ideology that justifies *classes*. It is difficult to doubt, however, that the political practice that goes along with this ideology will be technocratic, elitist, and *dirigiste* in character. The restoration of the bourgeois or of the pre-bourgeois state is not on the neoconservative agenda. What is on the agenda, as Steinfels describes it, is the rule of "policy professionals"—where "professional" means a liberal bureaucrat who is pessimistic about liberation but respects the liberties

of the market, who admires local communities and secondary associations but dislikes participatory politics, and who has the strength of mind to enjoy the privileges of his position. And then civility is a creed for the rest of us: teaching a proper respect for our meritocratic betters.

IV

Steinfels obviously thinks civility is more than that. He is a sympathetic critic of neoconservatism—genuinely sympathetic and very much a critic. A highly intelligent Catholic radical, he chooses in this book not to press, indeed barely to put forward, his own position. But he clearly doesn't believe that the alternative to the nervous liberalism of the neoconservatives is a brash and buoyant liberalism. His own view of the present crisis overlaps with theirs; he understands the dangers of

> the widespread distrust of institutions among all classes, the dissolution of religious values and the proliferation of cults . . . the anomie and hostility of many inner-city youth, the drift and hedonism of much popular culture, the abandonment of the vulnerable to bureaucratic dependency, the casual amorality of the business world, the retreat from civic consciousness and responsibility. . . .[6]

But he insists that none of these can be dealt with unless one is prepared to examine the "faultlines" of liberal capitalism. This the neoconservatives don't do (Bell, again, is a partial exception). Hence, their concern for "moral culture"—their great strength, according to Steinfels—is vitiated. They argue rightly for the "supporting communities, disciplined thinking and speech, self-restraint, and accepted conventions" that a healthy

[6] *The Neo-Conservatives*, p. 212.

moral culture requires. But they do not tell us, and they cannot, how moral health is ever to be regained, for they have not yet looked unblinkingly at the processes through which it was (or is being) lost.

There is a positive argument that follows from this sort of criticism. Steinfels does not make it, and so I can't tell what form it would take in his hands. This book leaves one waiting for the next. The argument might go something like this. If the old "supporting communities" are in decline or gone forever, then it is necessary to reform them or build new ones. If there are to be new (or renewed) communities, they must have committed members. If marginality and deference are gone too, these members must also be participants, responsible for shaping and sustaining their own institutions. Participation requires a democratic and egalitarian politics—and that is also the only setting, in the modern world, for mutual aid and self-restraint. "The spirit of a commercial people," John Stuart Mill wrote almost a century and a half ago, "will be, we are persuaded, essentially mean and slavish, wherever public spirit is not cultivated by an extensive participation of the people in the business of government in detail. . . ."[7] The argument is as true today as it was when Mill wrote, and far more pressing. Neoconservatism represents the search for an alternative argument, alert to the meanness and slavishness, defensive about commerce, hostile to participation. The search is powerfully motivated and often eloquently expressed, but I do not see how it can succeed.

[7] "M. de Tocqueville on Democracy in America," in *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, ed. Marshall Cohen (New York, 1961), p. 141.

Source: M. Walzer, 'Nervous liberals', *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat*, Basic Books, New York, 1980, pp. 92–106.

2

Bureaucracy and the state

Erik O. Wright

Our discussion of the historical transformations of the process of accumulation closed with a somewhat speculative discussion of the emergent solutions to the economic stagnation of the 1970s and the new contradictions which those solutions were likely to engender. The central proposition was that the capitalist state was likely to engage in qualitatively deeper forms of intervention into the economy, moving from intervention and planning at the level of market relations towards planning within production itself. Such a transformation in the role of the capitalist state would itself generate new contradictions specifically centred around the politicization of the accumulation process.

Such changes in the forms of state activity in capitalist societies and in the contradictions of accumulation are of crucial importance in any discussion of socialist politics. A number of questions are immediately posed: In what ways do these changes in the role of the state affect the relationship of the capitalist state to class struggle? Do these new contradictions open up new possibilities for the left to use the capitalist state as part of a revolutionary strategy? What implications do these developments have for the classic debate between peaceful, incremental roads to socialism and violent, revolutionary strategies for socialism?

I cannot rigorously answer most of these questions, but I will try to clarify some of the issues involved in answering them. In this chapter I will focus on one specific issue which underscores all of these questions on socialist strategies: the problem of bureaucracy. In particular, I will address the question: how should we understand the relationship between class struggle

and the internal structure of the state?[1] We will explore this question by comparing the analyses of bureaucracy and the state of two influential theorists, Max Weber and V. I. Lenin. In the next chapter we will link this discussion of bureaucracy and the capitalist state to the analysis of class formation and accumulation contradictions developed earlier.

In the summer of 1917, in opposite corners of Europe, two essays were written on the nature of the state, bureaucracy, and politics. One, *Parliament and Government in a Reconstructed Germany*, was written by Max Weber; the other, *The State and Revolution*, was written by Vladimir Lenin. In spite of the obvious differences between the two men—one was a liberal German academician, the other a professional Russian revolutionary—they had certain things in common. Both were men of about fifty years of age whose intellectual lives had been decisively shaped by the work of Karl Marx. Both felt that their ideas on the state were strongly out of favour in the ruling circles of their respective countries. Both wrote their essays in the hopes of influencing political developments. In the immediate years following the publications of the essays, attempts were made to put the ideas of both into practice: Lenin's ideas in the attempt to build socialism after the Bolshevik Revolution, and Weber's in the attempt to create a viable parliamentary democracy in the Weimar Republic.

Both essays deal with many of the same questions, though in sharply different ways and leading to radically different conclusions: How can the state apparatus be controlled? Is it possible for the masses to govern and control the state? What is the relationship of representative institutions to the state bureaucracy in capitalist society? What can be done about the ever-increasing appropriation of power by bureaucrats? What are the consequences of socialism for the nature of the state? These are

1. While there has been a tremendous growth in Marxist theoretical work on the capitalist state in recent years, relatively little has been explicitly focused on the problem of the internal structures of the state. An especially interesting analysis of this question which explicitly contrasts the internal organization structures of the capitalist state with both the feudal state and the socialist state, is Göran Therborn, *What does the Ruling Class do when it Rules?*, London NLB 1978. For an earlier treatment of similar themes developed within the broad framework of the Frankfurt school, see the work of Claus Offe.

issues that are no less important today than half a century ago and are still matters of intense debate.

In the following section, Weber's argument in *Parliament and Government* will be laid out systematically. In a few places material will be drawn from *Economy and Society* (the bulk of which was written before 1917) to elaborate certain points more fully. This will be followed by a comparable presentation of Lenin's argument in *The State and Revolution*. After both Weber's and Lenin's analyses have been presented, the underlying assumptions of both positions will be compared, and the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments assessed.

Weber's Argument

By 1917 Weber was convinced that German politics were being conducted in a totally irresponsible and incompetent manner. As a German nationalist, he felt that it was crucial to understand the sources of this incompetence, for if it were not corrected, Germany "would be condemned to remain a small and conservative country, perhaps with a fairly good public administration in purely technical respects, but at any rate a provincial people without the opportunity of counting in the arena of world politics—and also without any moral right to it." (1462)[2] After examining the history of German politics in the years since Bismarck, Weber became convinced that "every German policy, irrespective of its goals, is condemned to failure in view of the given constitutional set-up and the nature of our policy machinery, and that this will remain so if conditions do not change." (1384) The critical aspect of this constitutional set-up was the powerlessness of parliament. Weber felt that while significantly strengthening parliamentary institutions would not guarantee a dramatic improvement in the quality of German politics, such a change was essential if there was to be any hope for the future.

This general conclusion concerning the necessity for a strong

2. All pages numbers in paretheses in this section refer to the English language edition of *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, New York 1968. Citations from pp. 1381–1462 are from Weber's essay "Parliament and Government in a Reconstructed Germany: A Contribution to the Political Critique of Officialdom and Party Politics". All other citations are from the text of *Economy and Society*.

parliament was based on a number of propositions about the nature of politics and bureaucracies and the problem of political leadership in "modern" society:

Proposition 1. With the development of capitalism and the increasing complexity of society, the needs for rational administration expand both quantitatively and qualitatively. As a result, both public and private organizations tend to become more and more bureaucratized.[3]

"The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization", Weber writes, "has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form." (973)[4]

3. Weber's formal definition of "bureaucracy" includes the following characteristics:
(1) [Officials] are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations.
(2) They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices.
(3) Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense.
(4) The office is filled by a free contractual relationship. Thus, in principle, there is free selection.
(5) Candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualifications. In the most rational case, this is tested by examination or guaranteed by diplomas certifying technical training or both. They are *appointed*, not elected.
(6) They are remunerated by fixed salaries in money.
(7) The office is treated as the sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent.
(8) It constitutes a career. There is a system of "promotion" according to seniority or to achievement or both. Promotion is dependent upon the judgement of superiors.
(9) The official works entirely separated from ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position.
(10) He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office. (220–221).

4. By "monocratic form" or "monocracy" Weber means a bureaucratic organization at the top of which is a single individual rather than a group of individuals (a "collegial body").

Bureaucratic forms of organization increasingly characterize private business corporations, churches, political parties, and other organizations in which rational efficiency is important to success. "This is increasingly so", Weber argues, "the larger the association is, the more complicated its tasks are, and above all, the more its existence depends on power—whether it involves a power struggle on the market, in the electoral arena or on the battlefield." (1399) "The future," Weber concludes, "belongs to bureaucratization." (1401)

Proposition 2. As bureaucratization increases, the power of bureaucrats tends to increase, both with respect to nonbureaucratic organizations and with respect to the nonbureaucratic elements of bureaucracies

"The power of a fully developed bureaucracy", Weber writes, "is always great, under normal conditions, overtowering. The political master always finds himself, vis-à-vis the trained official, in the position of a dilettante facing the expert." (991) This progressively increasing power of bureaucracies and bureaucrats grows out of several interconnected characteristics of bureaucratic organization: (1) the practical effectiveness and increasing indispensability of bureaucratic organizations,[5] (2) the expert technical knowledge controlled by the bureaucrats, and (3) the "administrative secrets" (knowledge about the inner workings of the bureaucracy) controlled by bureaucrats. This last element is especially important. Outsiders are in a weak position not merely because of the technical expertise of the bureaucrats, but because of the bureaucratic control of files, information, and procedures.

Given this constant expansion of bureaucratic power, it is increasingly problematic, Weber argues, whether or not any independent power will be able to control the state bureaucracy. In his discussion of bureaucracy as an ideal type Weber stresses

5. Weber writes: "The rule . . . cannot dispense with or replace the bureaucratic apparatus once it exists . . . [for] if the apparatus stops working, or if its work is interrupted by force, chaos results which is difficult to master by any improvised replacements from among the governed. . . . Increasingly the material fate of the masses depends upon the continuous and correct functioning of the ever more bureaucratic organizations of private capitalism and the idea of replacing them becomes more and more utopian." (988)

that "at the top of a bureaucratic organization there is necessarily an element which is at least not purely bureaucratic. The category of bureaucracy is one applied only to the exercise of control by means of a particular kind of administrative staff." (222) This non-bureaucratic top has an intrinsically political quality since it must deal with the alternative ends that the bureaucracy serves and not merely with the means for accomplishing those ends. With the growing power of the state bureaucracy, Weber argues, there is increasing danger that these political positions will become monopolized by the bureaucrats themselves, resulting in the development of a system of "completely unsupervised office holding". "In view of the growing indispensability of the state bureaucracy and its corresponding increase in power, how can there be any guarantee that any powers will remain which can check or effectively control the tremendous influence of this stratum [bureaucrats]?" (1403) The critical issue in this problem of controlling the bureaucracy is how people are selected to fill these top administrative-political positions, in particular, whether they are bureaucrats selected by behind-the-scenes "unofficial patronage" or professional politicians selected through open, parliamentary struggle.

Proposition 3. *If the top administration of the state bureaucracy is in the hands of bureaucrats, then there will be a strong tendency for:*
(A) the political direction of the bureaucracy to be irresponsible and ineffective, especially in times of crisis; and
(B) the behind-the-scenes influence of big capitalists in the running of the state bureaucracy to be maximized.

A. "The essence of politics", Weber writes, "is struggle": struggle over ends and the power to accomplish ends. Effective and responsible political leadership consists in knowing how to weigh competing and conflicting ends, how to negotiate compromises "sacrificing the less important for the more important" (1404), how to recruit allies and form coalitions in political battles, and so forth. These skills are arts that require intensive

training. For the political direction of the state bureaucracy to be effective it is therefore necessary that the top administrators be thoroughly trained in this art of politics, and furthermore, that mechanisms exist which hold them accountable for the *political* quality of their administration.

The entire structure and ethos of bureaucracy makes the professional bureaucrat unsuited for such a political directorate. While bureaucrats are highly skilled in techniques of rational execution of programmes, they are almost inevitably incompetent in political skills. This incompetence stems from the nature of bureaucratic responsibility: "An official who receives a directive which he considers wrong can and is supposed to object to it. If his superior insists on its execution, it is his duty and even his honour to carry it out as if it corresponded to his innermost conviction, and to demonstrate in this fashion that his sense of duty stands above his personal preference." (1404)

There is little or no scope for the development of political talents within the bureaucratic ranks, and as a result, career bureaucrats generally lack the capacity for real political leadership: "Our officialdom has been brilliant whenever it had to prove its sense of duty, its impartiality and mastery of organizational problems in the face of official, clearly formulated tasks of a specialized nature. . . . But here we are concerned with political, not bureaucratic achievements, and the facts themselves provoke the recognition which nobody can truthfully deny: That bureaucracy failed completely whenever it was expected to deal with *political* problems. This is no accident; rather it would be astonishing if capabilities inherently so alien to one another would emerge within the same political structure." (1417) The control of the administrative apex of the bureaucracy by bureaucrats thus leads to politically irresponsible and ineffective direction of bureaucratic activity. In times of peace and domestic tranquillity this might not be terribly serious; but when crisis occurs, the results can be devastating.

B. Ineffectiveness and irresponsibility are not the only costs of uncontrolled bureaucratic domination. In addition, Weber argues, it tends to maximize the covert influence of big capitalist interests in the administration of the state. "The big capitalist interests of the present day, like those of the past, are apt, in

political life—in parties and in all other connections that are important to them—to prefer monocracy [instead of collegial control such as parliament]. For monocracy is, from their point of view, more 'discreet'. The monocratic chief is more open to personal influence and is more easily swayed, thus making it more readily possible to influence the administration of justice and other governmental activity in favour of such powerful interests." (283–284) While the influence of large capitalist interests is by no means negligible even where there are strong parliaments (especially, Weber argues, when parties are organized as "political machines" as was common in the United States), those interests attain the most unrestricted scope when bureaucracy is the least controlled.[6] This combination of a predominance of capitalist influence behind the scenes with irresponsible and ineffective political leadership of the state bureaucracy, Weber felt, characterized Germany from the time of Bismarck. The only way out of this situation, Weber argued, was for professional politicians to replace bureaucrats in the top administrative positions. For this to be possible, a strong parliament was essential.

Proposition 4. *"Only a working, not merely speech-making parliament, can provide the ground for the growth and selective ascent of genuine leaders, not merely demagogic talents. A working parliament . . . is one which supervises the administration by continuously sharing its work."* (1416)

While Weber feels that only professional politicians can bring effective and responsible leadership to the bureaucracy, he does not feel that politicians are necessarily any more moral or

6. In a typical liberal manner, Weber contrasts the influence of big capital on state policy to a more diffuse influence of a plurality of organized groups. In effect he is saying that to the extent the top of the state apparatus is dominated by the bureaucracy, the interests of big capital will dominate over the interests of "society". It is possible, without doing much violence to the logic of Weber's argument, to recast this analysis in terms of the contrast between the interests of particular capitalists and the interests of the capitalist class as a whole. That is, Weber's argument is equivalent to saying that bureaucratic domination of the apex of the state apparatus tends to generate a preponderance of particularistic capitalist interests over the interests of the class as a whole within the state.

honest than are professional bureaucrats: "The motives of party members are no more merely idealist than are the usual philistine interests of bureaucratic competitors in promotions and benefices. Here, as there, personal interests are usually at stake." (1416) What is of critical importance, Weber argues, is that "these universal human frailties do not prevent the selection of capable leaders." (1416) Politicians can become potentially effective leaders not because they have necessarily better personal qualities than bureaucrats, but because they operate in an institutional context which develops political talents, selects for leadership positions those individuals who most successfully demonstrate those talents, and holds those leaders accountable for the political quality of their actions. If such an institutional context is absent, professional politicians will behave much like bureaucrats who occupy positions of power at the top of the administration. In modern, complex industrial society, Weber insists, the only institution that can accomplish these tasks of political recruitment, training, and accountability is a powerful parliament.

A strong working parliament accomplishes three essential things: first, it provides the institutional means for effectively controlling the unrestrained power of the bureaucracy; second, it generates the talented political leadership necessary for responsibly directing bureaucratic activity; third, it provides the mechanisms for holding that leadership accountable.

A. *Administrative supervision.* A working parliament's effectiveness in controlling the bureaucracy stems from the active involvement of parliamentary committees in supervising and investigating the activities of various bureaucratic departments: "There is no substitute for the systematic cross-examination (under oath) of experts before a parliamentary commission in the presence of the respective departmental officials. This alone guarantees public supervision and a thorough inquiry. . . . The parliamentary right of inquiry should be an auxiliary means and, for the rest, a whip, the mere existence of which will force the administrative chiefs to account for their actions in such a way as to make its use unnecessary." (1418) Through such investigatory committees, the parliament shares in the work of administration by examining bureaucratic

records, formulating legislative measures to improve bureaucratic performance, adjusting budgets for various departments, and so forth.

B. *Leadership creation.* Parliamentary investigation and committee work is also one of the basic means for developing the leadership qualities of politicians: "Only such intensive training, through which the politician must pass in the committees of a powerful *working* parliament, turns such an assembly into a recruiting ground not for mere demagogues but for positively participating politicians. . . . Only such co-operation between civil servants and politicians can guarantee the continuous supervision of the administration and, with it, the political education of leaders and led." (1420) At the same time, a powerful parliament generates talented political leadership in at least three other ways. First, the sheer fact of power attracts individuals with leadership qualities; a powerless parliament makes a political career uninviting.[7] Second, not only does power attract leadership talent, but also the process of parliamentary political battles cultivates that talent, particularly the ability to recruit allies and make the necessary compromises to establish a solid following. Third, the "natural selection" of the competitive struggle for power tends to push the more capable leadership into the top positions. In this process, political parties play an absolutely key role. As in all modern mass associations, there is a strong tendency for political parties to become bureaucratized and for the party functionary to replace talented politicians in positions of power. It is only when the stakes of parliamentary struggle are high, when victory brings real power to the party, that this tendency towards bureaucratic ossification is counteracted; a political party cannot afford to keep talented political leadership from rising if it hopes to be successful.

7. "In the face of the powerlessness of parliament [in Germany of 1917] and the resulting bureaucratic character of the ministerial positions, a man with a strong power drive and the qualities that go with it would have to be a fool to venture into this miserable web of mutual resentment and on this slippery floor of court intrigue, as long as his talents and energies can apply themselves in fields such as the giant enterprises, cartels, banks and wholesale firms. . . . Stripped of all phraseology, our so-called monarchic government amounts to nothing but this process of *negative selection* which diverts all major talents to the service of capitalist interests." (1413)

C. *Political accountability.* Finally, strong parliamentary institutions contain built-in mechanisms of accountability. When top administrative positions are filled by bureaucrats through behind-the-scenes deals, there is no way to hold them publicly accountable for their activity: "Unofficial patronage, then, is the worst form of parliamentary patronage—one that favours mediocrity since nobody can be held responsible. It is a consequence of our rule by conservative civil servants. . . . Patronage in this system is not in the hands of politicians and parties, which might be held responsible by the public, but works through private channels. . . ." (1429–1430) Where top positions are filled through open, parliamentary struggles, however, a certain minimum accountability is assured: "The politician, and above all, the party leader who is rising to public power, is exposed to public scrutiny through the criticism of opponents and competitors and can be certain that, in the struggle against him, the motives and means of his ascendancy will be ruthlessly publicized." (1450)

While the accountability that accompanies electoral campaigns does not by any means prevent demagogy, it does tend to make the demagogue more politically responsible. Beyond electoral accountability, a strong parliament itself has the power (through parliamentary inquiry, votes of no confidence, etc.) to hold the top administrative leadership accountable for its actions. This interplay of competing parties, accountable, elected leadership, and investigative parliamentary committees creates a political structure that, Weber felt, would guarantee a minimum political responsibility on the part of the political leadership.

Weber's expectations about the benefits of a strong parliament were relatively limited. He certainly did not feel that it would automatically create a happy and prosperous society or even solve all of the political ills of industrial society. But he did feel that all other alternative political structures would not even be able to guarantee the minimum political effectiveness of a working parliament. In particular, he argues that for a variety of different reasons, monarchy, (1406) "passive" democracy, (983, 1453) and "active mass" democracy will all inevitably strengthen the purely bureaucratic control of the bureaucracy. The most important of these for the comparison with

Lenin is active mass democratization—the process of expanding in various ways the scope of participation of citizens in political life. Two of the principles of active democratization are: "(1) prevention of the development of a closed status group of officials in the interest of a universal accessibility of office, and (2) minimization of the authority of officialdom in the interest of expanding the sphere of influence of 'public opinion' as far as practicable. Hence, wherever possible, political democracy [i.e., active democracy] strives to shorten the term of office through election and recall, and to be relieved from a limitation to candidates with expert qualifications." (985) The result is that while passive democratization tends to encourage bureaucratization, the principles of active democratization tend to work against bureaucratization.

This might lead one to believe that the most expansive, most "mass" active democratization would provide the best safeguard against bureaucratic domination. No, Weber says. Just as monarchic government cannot possibly supervise the bureaucracy, neither can a truly active *mass* democracy.

By "mass democracy" Weber means democratic states which lack significant and powerful "*free* representative institutions" (i.e., representative institutions in which the representatives are not narrowly mandated but rather are "free" to engage in political bargaining, struggle, etc.). Such democracies take one of two forms: either they are "direct democracies" or "plebiscitary democracies". The former Weber feels cannot exist in a large and complex society. They would simply be technically impossible. The closest thing in modern society to direct democracy is "the Soviet type of republican organization where it serves as a substitute for immediate democracy since the latter is impossible in a mass organization."[8] (293) Soviet assemblies (as an ideal type) are characterized by imperative mandates, recall at any time, short terms of office, and other characteristics derived from the principles of direct democracy.[9]

8. Whenever Weber discusses "soviets" in *Parliament and Government* and *Economy and Society*, he treats them as an "ideal-type" organization that adapts the principles of direct democracy to the conditions of modern society. Nowhere does he discuss them as a concrete historical phenomenon or present any empirical data on the actual functioning of soviets.

9. The basic characteristics of direct democracy as elaborated by Weber are: (a) short terms of office, if possible only running between two general meetings of

Weber feels that the prospects for such mandated representative institutions to control bureaucracy are quite limited. Mandated assemblies would work reasonably well, Weber argues, only as long as there were no significant antagonisms between (and within) the representatives' constituencies. As soon as serious conflicts occur, a mandated assembly would become completely impotent since the representatives would be prohibited from negotiating compromises. They would be forced to return to their constituency to alter their mandated position on every significant issue, thus making effective political bargaining impossible. The result would be a complete paralysis of the assembly and thus an incapacity to supervise effectively the bureaucracy. As soon as the principle of imperative mandates is relaxed, however, the representative ceases to be simply the delegated agent of the electors and begins to exercise real authority over them. The result is that the "soviet" form of direct democracy is transformed into the beginnings of a "parliamentary" system.

Plebiscitary democracy (i.e., formal government through mass votes on issues and leadership) is equally impractical: "The plebiscite as means of election as well as of legislation has inherent technical limitations, since it only answers 'Yes' or 'No'. Nowhere in mass states does it take over the most important function of parliament, that of determining the budget. In such cases the plebiscite would also obstruct more seriously the passing of all bills that result from a compromise between conflicting interests, for the most diverse reasons can lead to a 'No' if there is no means of accommodating opposed interests through negotiation. The referendum does not know the *com-*

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the members; (b) liability to recall at any time; (c) the principle of rotation or of selection by lot in filling offices so that every member takes a turn at some time (making it possible to avoid the position of power of technically trained persons or of those with long experience and command of official secrets); (d) strictly defined mandate for the conduct of office laid down by the assembly of members (the sphere of competence is thus concretely defined and not of a general character); (e) a strict obligation to render an accounting to the general assembly; (f) the obligation to submit every unusual question which has not been foreseen to the assembly of members or to a committee representing them; (g) the distribution of power between large numbers of offices each with its own particular function; (h) the treatment of office as an avocation and not a full time occupation. (289)

promise upon which the majority of laws is based in every mass state with strong regional, social, religious and other cleavages." (1455) Since real government cannot in fact be conducted through constant referenda and plebiscites, there is a strong tendency for such systems to degenerate into "caesarist" forms of leadership selection: "Active mass democratization means that the political leader is no longer proclaimed a candidate because he has proved himself in a circle of *honoratoires*, then becoming a leader because of his parliamentary accomplishments, but that he gains the trust and faith of the masses in him and his power with the means of demagogy. In substance this means a shift toward the *caesarist* mode of selection." (1451)

The critical characteristic of such caesarist leadership (i.e., leadership directly selected by a show of *mass* confidence) is that it is accountable to a working, powerful parliament. Because of his position of enormous power and prestige, such a leader usually has at his disposal all of the means necessary to guarantee mass support. But in the end, he is little different from a hereditary monarch in his capacity to control the bureaucratic apparatus, and like monarchic government, caesarist leadership tends to generate uncontrolled bureaucratic domination.

The only way out of these impasses, Weber maintains, is through active parliamentary democracy. While in any modern, mass state a certain tendency towards caesarism is inevitable, parliamentary institutions have the capacity to control such tendencies, and in so doing, to control the bureaucracy as well. Neither one-man rule, of either the caesarist or monarchical variety, nor mass rule, of either the soviet or plebiscitary variety, can accomplish this.

Lenin's Argument

The basic question that underlies Lenin's analysis in *The State and Revolution* is quite different from Weber's: How can the state be made to serve the interests of the working class? or alternatively, what is the relationship between the state apparatus and the goals of a socialist revolution? Such questions had particularly poignant implications in the summer of 1917, when the essay was written. The February Revolution had already occurred, establishing a bourgeois "constitutional"

government; the October Revolution was brewing. Such a conjuncture sharply raised a central theoretical issue that has preoccupied much writing and political struggle on the Left for a century: Should the state be considered an essentially *neutral apparatus* that merely needs to be "captured" by a working-class socialist political party for it to serve the interests of the working class, or is the apparatus of the state in capitalist society a distinctively *capitalist apparatus* that cannot possibly be "used" by the working class, and as a result, must be destroyed and replaced by a radically different form of the state?[10] Lenin very decisively takes the latter position, arguing that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is incompatible with the bourgeois state apparatus, and therefore that the capitalist state must be smashed and replaced by new revolutionary "soviet" institutions.

Although much of the essay takes the form of a polemic against the more reformist perspective, Lenin's analysis does contain a fairly coherent theory of the state, bureaucracy, and the implications of socialism for state structure:

Proposition 1. *"The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. . . . The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another. . . . The state is a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class."* (267, 268, 280)[11]

10. These two conceptions of the state are frequently designated the "state in capitalist society" vs. the "capitalist state" theories. The writings of C. Wright Mills, G. William Domhoff, and to a much lesser extent Ralph Miliband fall mainly into the former, whereas Lenin and the French "structuralist" Marxists (Althusser, Poulantzas, and others) fall into the latter. The critical difference between the two centres on whether the state is analysed primarily in terms of who controls it (capitalists, elites, bureaucrats, etc.) or in terms of what kind of a state it is (feudal state, bourgeois state, socialist state, etc.). Of course, there is no necessary reason why the two perspectives cannot be combined.

11. All page references are to the one-volume edition of *Selected Works*, London 1969, unless otherwise specified.

Lenin adopts with very little modification the classic Marxian conception of the state. The state is defined not only in terms of the *means* at its disposal (the control of violence), but also in terms of the *ends* it serves (class domination and suppression of class struggle). This function is characteristic of all states, Lenin argues, including a socialist state; what differs is the class being oppressed and the class which rules. In a capitalist state, the bourgeoisie rules and the proletariat is suppressed; in a socialist state, the proletariat rules and the capitalist class is suppressed. All states imply repression.

Proposition 2. *"A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell . . . it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it."* (273)

This is the critical part of Lenin's argument. He argues not merely that capitalists happen to control the political institutions of a capitalist society, but also that those institutions are structured in ways which guarantee that control. In particular Lenin views parliament as a perfect instrument for ensuring capitalist domination. This is true for two reasons: First, parliament is an institution that mystifies the masses and legitimates the social order; second, the structure of capitalist society ensures that the bourgeoisie will necessarily control parliament.

A. *Mystification and legitimation.* The central way that parliament mystifies political life, according to Lenin, is that it appears to be the basic organ of power in the society, and thus gives the appearance that the people's elected representatives run the state, when in fact all important decisions are made behind the scenes: "Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of 'state' is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk

for the special purpose of fooling the 'common people'." (296) Lenin argued that parliaments in capitalist society must necessarily be "mere talking-shops" since important state functions are controlled by the executive apparatus (the bureaucracy), and thus they necessarily become sources of political mystification.

B. *Bourgeois control of parliament.* Even if parliaments did have some residual power, they would still be instruments of capitalist class domination because of the direct control of parliament by the bourgeoisie: "[Bourgeois parliamentary democracy] is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remain, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. . . . Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that 'they cannot be bothered with democracy', 'they cannot be bothered with politics'; in the ordinary peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life. . . . If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy we see everywhere, in the 'petty'—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for paupers!), in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight . . . but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy." (326)

The net result is, according to Lenin, that the masses only get "to decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism." (295)

Proposition 3. Bureaucracy is the basic structure through which the capitalist class rules. Furthermore, bureaucratic organization is suited only for capitalist domination.

Lenin bases this proposition on three arguments: bureaucracy is functional for capitalism; bureaucrats, big and small, are dependent on the bourgeoisie; and bureaucratic organization makes popular control of administration impossible.

A. *Bureaucracy is functional for capitalism.* "The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus", Lenin writes, "proceeded during all of the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism." (284) As class struggle intensified with the development of capitalism, the progressive expansion and centralization of the bureaucratic apparatus became necessary:—"in its struggle against the [proletarian] revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor" (282: quoting Marx, from the *Eighteenth Brumaire*).

Finally, the latest stages of capitalist development, Lenin argues, have led to an even greater level of bureaucratization: "Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the 'state machine' and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus against the proletariat both in monarchical and in the freest, most republican countries." (286)

Bureaucratization is thus seen by Lenin as a functional response by the capitalist state to the pressures of class struggle which accompany the development of capitalism.[12]

12. Not only does capitalism tend to result in the bureaucratization of bourgeois state institutions, it also tends to bureaucratize working class organizations: "We cannot do without officials under *capitalism*, under *the rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organizations and the trade unions are corrupted—or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing

B. *Dependence of bureaucrats on the bourgeoisie.* This is most obvious in the case of top bureaucratic positions, since these tend to be distributed as political spoils among the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties. The "restricted nature" of bourgeois democracy guarantees that a revolutionary working-class party would never be able to partake in these spoils and thus could never control the top administrators. Furthermore, Lenin argues, this dependency on the bourgeoisie involves not merely the top echelons of the bureaucracy, but the apparatus as a whole: "In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions [the bureaucracy and the standing army] by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. . . . In particular, it is the petty bourgeoisie who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs raising their holders above the people." (283)[13]

C. *The separation of bureaucracy from the people.* For the working class to become a "ruling class" it is essential that institutions exist through which workers can "rule". Bureaucratic organization, Lenin insists, makes such mass participation impossible. This is a crucial part of Lenin's argument, for it ensures that the sheer existence of bureaucracy tends to further capitalist interests (or, at a minimum, to impede the realization

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above the people. That is the *essence* of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, even proletarian functionaries will inevitably be 'bureaucratized' to a certain extent." (347) This bureaucratization of working class organizations, in Lenin's analysis, tends to undermine the political strength of the organization and the confidence of the people in their leadership. Such tendencies toward bureaucratization are thus also functional for capitalist interest.

13. In terms of the discussion in chapter 1, Lenin is in effect arguing that state bureaucrats are either directly bound to the bourgeoisie (top officials) or occupy contradictory class locations which link their interests at least partially to the bourgeoisie. Non-bureaucratic employees of the state—transportation workers, postal workers, janitors, etc.—would not be linked to the bourgeoisie in this way.

of working class interests). The key characteristics of bureaucratic organization which separate it from the masses are:
(1) appointment of officials rather than election, and particularly, the impossibility of recall;
(2) the high salaries and special privileges of officials, which concretely tie their interests to the bourgeoisie, create an aura of "official grandeur" about them, and place them "above the people"; and
(3) the restricted quality of bourgeois democracy, which separates legislation from administrative activity and prevents the active participation of the people in either. While the conditions of life strongly impede active participation in democratic politics in general, the separation of legislative activity from administrative activity absolutely prohibits any mass participation in administration.

If Lenin's analysis of the relationship of bureaucracy and parliament to capitalism is substantially correct, then it is clear that these state structures offer little or no possibility of being "captured" and used for the interests of the working class. Even *if* parliament could be captured by a revolutionary working-class majority and even *if* that parliament somehow had real power, still, Lenin argues, "it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state." (304) Thus, if the working class wishes to take power as a new ruling class and organize society in its own interests, it has no other choice than to destroy the old structures and create new ones.

Proposition 4. Socialism requires the complete destruction of bourgeois state institutions and their replacement by a new form of complete democracy or proletarian democracy (or, equivalently, proletarian dictatorship).

What will be the basic principles of these new institutions and how will they differ from the old structures? To begin, let us look at parliament: "The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institu-

tions from talking shops into 'working' bodies. 'The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time' " [quoting Marx]. (296) The model of this proletarian representative assembly was the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871: "The commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality and to account daily to the constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labour between legislative and executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism. . . ." (297)

"Democracy introduced as fully and consistently as conceivable", writes Lenin, "is transformed from bourgeois to proletarian democracy". (293) But as in all democracies, proletarian democracy still constitutes a "state", i.e., an organization of violence for the suppression of some class. Thus, proletarian democracy is at the same time a dictatorship of the proletariat: "Simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists." (327)

Administration, meanwhile, would cease to be organized bureaucratically and would gradually become democratized until, eventually, "the whole population, without exception, [would] proceed to discharge state functions." This, of course, would not happen overnight: "Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is not a utopia . . ." (297) This new form of administration would differ from traditional bureaucracy in a number of critical respects,

while in other respects it would be very similar to what Weber would call "bureaucratic" organization. To begin with the obvious differences: "The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its foundations and raze it to the ground; they will replace it with a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees against whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken that were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by all, so that all may become 'bureaucrats' for a time and that, therefore, nobody may be able to become a 'bureaucrat'." (343)

The last of these three characteristics of socialist administration—mass participation in control and accounting—is clearly the most problematic. Lenin knew that such participation would necessarily be limited initially, but he was convinced that "the accounting and control necessary for this [the smooth running of production] have been simplified by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic and issuing appropriate receipts." (337) The social conditions for mass participation in administration had also been created by capitalism and would be further developed by socialism: "The development of capitalism in turn creates the preconditions that enable all to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the 'training and disciplining' of millions of workers. . . . The possibility of this destruction [of bureaucracy] is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the people to a new life, will create such conditions for the majority of the population as will enable everybody, without exception, to perform 'state functions', and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of state in general." (336, 349)

Underlying this discussion of the possibilities of democratizing administrative control is a sharp distinction which Lenin draws between the roles of *bureaucrats* and *technical*

experts: "The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists, and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers." (337) The bureaucratic dimension of bourgeois administration thus centres on the way "control and accounting" are organized rather than on the total organization of the administration. In fact, Lenin regards the non-bureaucratic, technical aspects of bourgeois administration extremely favourably: "At the present the postal service is a business organized on the lines of a state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type, in which, standing over the common people, who are overburdened and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already at hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalist . . . we shall have a splendidly equipped mechanism, freed from the 'parasite', a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them all, as indeed all state officials in general, workmen's wages." (298–299)

This "splendidly equipped mechanism" is the "scientifically trained staff" responsible for the technical work of administration which is quite distinct from the "parasitic" bureaucratic structures of control and accounting. While the latter must be smashed by the working class, the former can be "captured" and used by the workers. The "complete democracy" Lenin stresses so much is limited to a democratization of control, not a democratization of technical expertise as such. The result would be that: "We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid 'foremen and accountants' (of course with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees)." (298) The democratization is also explicitly not meant to negate all subordination and authority in organization. To begin with, as Lenin says many times: "We are not utopians, we do not dream of dispensing at once with all administration, with all subordination. . . . No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with sub-

ordination, control and 'foremen and accountants'. The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. . . . We, the workers, shall organize large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers."(298)

Beyond the problems of authority inherited from the old order, moreover, Lenin argues, there will always be a certain amount of subordination and authority which is technically determined: "The technique of all these enterprises [large-scale industrial production] makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged." (342) Finally, the proletarian state would be quite centralized, but it would be a quite different kind of centralism from that of capitalist societies: It would "oppose conscious democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism." (301)

Lenin was unwilling in *The State and Revolution* to give more than a very general image of what the structures of a socialist society would be like. He strongly felt that to attempt to construct *a priori* blueprints for the "good" society was a form of utopianism. He argued that the concrete forms of the socialist state would emerge in a dialectical process from the attempt at building socialism: "To develop democracy to the utmost, to find the forms for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be 'taken separately'; it will be 'taken together' with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history." (320)

Comparisons

There is a very curious combination of close convergences and polar divergences between Weber's and Lenin's analyses of poli-

tics and bureaucracy. The basic starting points of their discussions are quite different: Weber is generally concerned with the problem of the *formal rationality* of political structures and in particular with the factors that contribute to political effectiveness and responsibility; Lenin, in contrast, is much more concerned with questions of *substantive rationality*, with the relationship of state structures to the class *ends* that they serve. Both arguments, however, pivot around a very similar critique of bureaucratic domination and of parliamentary institutions that are purely "speech-making" assemblies (Weber) or "talking shops" (Lenin). Although in *The State and Revolution* Lenin never specifically addresses the problem of leadership effectiveness and responsibility which is so important to Weber, he does agree with Weber that when representative institutions are powerless, the real centre of power shifts to the bureaucracy. Both men agree that this tends to facilitate the political domination of purely capitalist interests. There is even one aspect of the solution to the problem that both Lenin and Weber share: the need to create representative institutions that are active, *working* bodies. But they differ substantially in the overall thrust of their conclusions: Lenin calls for the replacement of bureaucracy and parliamentary representation by "soviet" political institutions; Weber argues that soviets are unworkable and advocates instead the development of powerful, elitist working parliaments. The following comparison will try to illuminate the critical differences in the underlying assumptions about the social world which lead to these different conclusions.

Before examining those assumptions, it will be useful to juxtapose Lenin's and Weber's general arguments. (In order to make the steps in the arguments parallel, the order and form of the propositions have been somewhat changed from the presentation in the two previous sections.)

Weber	Lenin
1. When parliament is merely a speechmaking assembly, the result is uncontrolled bureaucratic domination, which serves the interests of	1. With parliament being merely a talking shop, the real centres of state power are located in the bureaucracy, which is controlled by and

capitalists and produces ineffective and irresponsible political leadership.	serves the interests of the capitalist class.
2. However, bureaucracies are inevitable and necessary given the conditions of modern technology and production, and the mass scale of the modern state.	2. Bureaucracy is not a technological imperative necessitated by modern technology and mass administration; it is a specifically *political* imperative for the stability of capitalism and the domination of the bourgeoisie.
3. Since bureaucracy cannot be eliminated, the problem is to create guarantees that will prevent bureaucrats from overstepping their proper place and controlling the political direction of the bureaucracy.	3. In a capitalist society it is inevitable that representative institutions will be mere talking shops designed to fool the people; nothing can prevent the bureaucracy from being the real centre of power in advanced capitalist societies.
4. It is therefore necessary to develop institutions that will be able to create politically responsible and competent political leadership to direct that supervision.	4. If socialism is to be established, institutions must be created that make it possible for the working class to be organized as the ruling class and that will make the masses politically sophisticated, class conscious participants in state administration.
5. This can only be done through a strong, working parliament which can control the bureaucracy.	5. This can only be accomplished by smashing parliament and bureaucracy and replacing them by a dictatorship of the proletariat organized in working assemblies and soviet administration.

The assumptions underlying these two trains of reasoning will be discussed under four general headings: (1) the determinants of organizational structure; (2) the nature of the state and politics; (3) organizational structure and accountability; (4) contradictions and the limits on the possible.

The Determinants of Organizational Structure

One of the serious difficulties in comparing Weber's and Lenin's conceptions of the determinants of organizational structure is that they use terms such as "bureaucracy", "technician", and "official" in quite different ways. In part, these different usages reflect merely semantic differences, but in important ways they also reflect theoretical differences.

Lenin differentiates between three basic organizational functions—policy-making, control-accounting, and "administration"—in his analysis of bureaucracy and the state, whereas Weber makes the distinction between only two—policy-making and administration.[14] We will leave the discussion of policy-making to the next section (on the nature of the state) and focus here on the implications of Lenin's distinction between technical-administrative functions and accounting-control functions.

Throughout his analysis of bureaucracy, Lenin stresses the distinction between "bureaucrats" and "technicians". The former role corresponds to the control and accounting functions in organizations; the latter, to the technical-administrative functions. Weber does not ignore the issue of control and accounting in his discussion of bureaucracy, but he does not regard them as a distinctive function in the same way that Lenin does. Nowhere, moreover, does Weber emphasize the distinction between technical and bureaucratic roles in bureaucratic organizations. Control and accounting are partially absorbed as an integral part of the administrative func-

14. I am using the word "administration" here in a way that does not entirely correspond to either Lenin's or to Weber's usage, although it is closer to Lenin's. Lenin uses the expression "administration" to describe that aspect of public bureaucracies that would be left when bureaucrats would be replaced by officials elected by the people. I will use the term as a general expression to describe the function of executing policies or carrying out orders formulated by the political directorate.

tion of carrying out policy and partially absorbed in the function of policy-making itself.

This problem of the control and accounting functions in bureaucratic organizations bears directly on the question of the determinants of organizational structure. Both Lenin and Weber agree that those structural characteristics most closely related to the technical-administrative function are substantially determined by the technological and material conditions of modern society. But unlike Weber, Lenin does not feel that the control and accounting functions are determined in this same way. While the technical features of production may have become increasingly complex with capitalist development, Lenin argues that the strictly control and accounting functions "have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person". (294) In capitalist society these intrinsically simple functions of control and accounting are in the hands of bureaucrats, "i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing above the people" (347), not because it is *technically* necessary or efficient, but because it is *politically* necessary for the bureaucratic apparatus to be effective in controlling the proletariat. This separation of officials from the people is further mystified by the "official grandeur" of bureaucratic positions, which has led most workers to *believe* that they would be incapable of participating in administration. Finally, the factual absence of any participation by the people in politics has meant that these skills, even though fundamentally simple, have not been cultivated in most workers. The result is a pervasive mystification of the entire apparatus of the state. Weber, needless to say, disagrees strongly with Lenin. He feels that the administrative tasks of the bureaucracy—including the control and accounting activities—are extremely complex and that the masses are in fact incapable of effectively performing them.

The Nature of the State and Politics: Elite-Organization vs. Class-Structure

The different assumptions that underlie Lenin's and Weber's conceptions of the state are reflected in their very definitions of

the state. Weber first defines the notion of "organization" and then defines the state as a special kind of organization.

organization: "A social relationship which is either closed or limits the admission of outsiders will be called an organization when its regulations are enforced by specific individuals: a chief and, possibly, an administrative staff." (48)

political organization: "A 'ruling organization' will be called 'political' insofar as its existence and order is continuously safeguarded within a given territorial area by the threat and application of physical force on the part of the administrative staff." (54)

the state: "A compulsory political organization with continuous operations will be called a 'state' insofar as it successfully upholds the claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order." (54)

Weber then makes the important following elaboration: "It is not possible to define a political organization, including the state, in terms of the end to which its action is devoted. All the way from the provision for subsistence to the patronage of art, there is no conceivable end which *some* political association has not at some time pursued. From the protection of personal security to the administration of justice, there is none which *all* have recognized. Thus it is possible to define the 'political' character of an organization only in terms of the *means* peculiar to it, the use of force." (55) At the core of this definition of the state, therefore, there is an individual—the chief—and his staff which have at their disposal a distinctive kind of means—the monopoly of the legitimate use of force. Under certain circumstances the "chief" might be a group of people—a collegial body—but it is *never* a "class". Together the chief and his staff constitute an elite which controls this special kind of organization and uses it for a wide variety of purposes.

Lenin's notion of the state also centres around the use of force but it differs from Weber's definition in two central respects:

First, *the state is assumed to serve a specific function*, the suppression of class struggle and the maintenance of the domination of the ruling class (whatever that class might be). An institution or structure which did not serve such a function could not be a state in Lenin's analysis.

Second, *the state is conceived more as a "structure"* than simply

an organization controlled by an elite.[15] Of course, in many ways Lenin also conceives of the state as a special organization and frequently he discusses the concrete "connections" between the bourgeoisie and the state, the specific ways in which they influence it and control it. When Lenin discusses the state in these terms, he is not particularly inconsistent with Weber's usage. What is different is that Lenin also sees the state as an apparatus that by its very structure supports the domination of a particular ruling class. What is most important to Lenin about the "policy-making function" is not primarily the concrete individuals who make the policies, but rather the class whose rule is guaranteed by the structures within which those policies are formulated.

In short, Weber's concept of the state centres on the ways in which *elites* control a particular kind of *organization*; Lenin's conception of the state centres on the ways in which *classes* rule through a particular kind of *structure*.

Organizational Form and Accountability

The difference between an elite-organizational and a class-structural conception of the state bears directly on Weber's and Lenin's treatments of the problem of powerless parliaments and bureaucracy. Weber sees the powerlessness of parliament and the resulting uncontrolled domination of the bureaucracy as fundamentally an *organizational and leadership problem*, the only solution for which is the creation of a special organizational form—a strong working parliament. Whether or not such a strong working parliament will exist in a particular situation Weber largely attributes to contingent historical circumstances, to the actions of great men and the accidents of great events. In the case of Germany, the potential for the development of a viable working parliamentary organization

15. "Structure" is a much broader and more complex notion than "organization". Lenin, of course, does not formalize his concept of the state in these terms and thus would not have had the occasion to define "structure". The important point in the present context is that when the state is regarded as a "structure", it is no longer conceived of as a tightly bounded instrument (organization) which can be "controlled"; rather, it is conceived of as a complex network of institutions, organizations, and social relationships, or, to use Nicos Poulantzas's expression, "the organizing matrix behind institutions". (See *Political Power and Social Classes*, London 1973, p. 115n.)

had been severely damaged by the anti-parliamentary policies of one statesman, Bismarck.

Lenin sees the issue very differently. Parliaments are powerless and bureaucracies tend to be the site of the "real work of government" not because of some particular organizational failure, but because of the *structural requirements* of the stable domination of the capitalist class. Especially, in the "age of imperialism", when class struggle has become particularly intense and working class political parties potentially very strong, the bourgeoisie cannot rely on representative institutions to guarantee its rule, and thus it has tended to turn increasingly to the "executive" as the primary structure of class domination. The problem is not that parliamentary committees are not strong enough, that certain parliaments lack the formal constitutional right of inquiry, or that any particular statesman adopts strategies that undermine the stature of parliament. The problem is that parliament has ceased to be functional as an organ of class domination (but not as an instrument for legitimation—thus the maintenance of parliaments as "talking shops") for the bourgeoisie, and as a result, over a period of time, class conscious political leaders of the capitalist class have taken steps to see to it that parliamentary power has been reduced. From Lenin's perspective, therefore, the particular policies of a statesman like Bismarck, or the organizational failures of a particular kind of parliament should be understood as the *occasion* for the ascendancy of bureaucratic domination, but not as the crucial *cause* of that ascendancy.

Given Lenin's analysis of the causes of the powerlessness of parliaments and of bureaucratic domination, he sees the solution not in terms of organizational reform designed to cultivate effective leadership, but rather in terms of revolutionary change in the underlying class structure of the society (i.e., replacing the bourgeoisie by the proletariat as the ruling class). This does not mean that organizational structure is unimportant to Lenin. He spends a great deal of time, after all, saying how the specific structures of the capitalist state are incompatible with working class rule. But he treats those organizational characteristics as conceptually subordinate to the question of the class structure as such. Organizational structure becomes a kind of intervening variable that stabilizes and

generalizes the rule of a particular class, that rule being rooted in the basic class relations of the society. As a result of this emphasis on the class determination of organizational structure, Lenin never systematically deals with the problem of organizational accountability. The problem of accountability is solved for Lenin not by creating special organizational devices for controlling leadership, but by transforming the class structure within which any organizational form will operate. The assumption is that without such a transformation, no organizational form whatsoever could create a political leadership responsible and accountable to the working class, and that once the question of class domination is practically dealt with, the solution to the specifically organizational problems will be relatively straightforward.[16]

In Weber's analysis, Lenin's formulation is quite inadequate. Classes as such cannot rule; only individuals and small groups can actually run the state. At best such elites can formally be the representatives in a general way of a "class" and govern "in its name".[17] What is decisive for the character of a society to Weber is much less which class the elite represents than the organizational structure of domination with which it governs. What matters most in modern society, whether capitalist or socialist, is the enormous power of the bureaucracy, and the most important political issue is whether or not organizational

16. This subordination of organizational issues to class structure creates an important asymmetry in Lenin's analysis. Because Lenin can observe the organizational consequences of bourgeois class domination, he can in considerable detail attack those organizational structures and show how they would be incompatible with proletarian rule. But since proletarian class domination does not yet exist, he cannot observe the organizational consequences of that class structure, and thus he is forced to remain quite vague about what those organizations would look like: "That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasizing the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of the development of the higher phase of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions." (333)

17. Weber's position on the question of "class rule" is similar to that of Karl Kautsky, who insisted that a class "can only dominate but not govern." Lenin totally rejected such a position. In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin wrote: "It is altogether wrong, also, to say that a class cannot govern. Such an absurdity can only be uttered by a parliamentary *cretin* who sees nothing but bourgeois parliaments, who has noticed nothing but 'ruling parties'."

forms will be created to contain that bureaucratic domination. In short, unless the organizational problem of accountability is solved, it matters little which class formally dominates. Lenin argues the exact opposite: unless the problem of class rule is solved, it matters little whether or not leadership is formally accountable.

The Meaning of Contradictions and the Limits on the Possible

Weber and Lenin suffer from complementary forms of theoretical underdevelopment, which have critical consequences for their ultimate conclusions. To state the contrast in somewhat simplified terms: Weber has an elaborate theory of organizational contradictions, but an underdeveloped theory of social contradictions; Lenin has a relatively developed theory of social contradictions, but a limited theory of organizational contradictions.

This theoretical underdevelopment has two critical consequences in Lenin's analysis. First, in Lenin's analysis of capitalist society, there is a partial fusion of his critique of capitalism as such and a critique of complex organizations. Bureaucratic organization is condemned because it serves capitalist interests in a capitalist society. While this may be true—even Weber says as much—it does not follow that this constitutes a criticism of bureaucracy as such. Without a theory of organizations, a theory of the internal dynamics and processes of organizations, it is not possible to see which criticisms should be directed at the distinctively capitalist context of bureaucracy and which should be directed at the bureaucratic structures themselves. While Lenin is probably correct that such a theory of internal, organizational processes can be understood only in the context of an analysis of class relations, his critique of capitalist organizational structures suffers from not developing such a theory.

Second, in Lenin's analysis of socialism there is virtually no analysis of the internal contradictions of soviet structures of organization. Lenin certainly does see conflict *between* soviet institutions and the "remnants" of capitalist society, but he does not see any contradictions *within* the organizational structures

of soviets themselves. Lenin felt that the main threat to the viability of soviet organization came from the tendencies towards bureaucratization surviving from bourgeois society. In his analysis, two processes were seen as potentially counteracting these bureaucratic pressures: (1) The vanguard party of the proletariat would actively assume the leadership role in building soviet institutions. The party would struggle against bureaucratic elements and would directly intervene in state activities to strengthen the participation of the masses in state administration. (2) As soviet organization became more and more pervasive, it would tend to inhibit the growth of bureaucracy. Since direct democracy and bureaucracy are antithetical principles of political organization, Lenin implicitly reasons that as the former becomes stronger and expands, the latter will necessarily become weaker and decline.

Weber would have sharply disagreed with Lenin's model of soviet organization in two main respects. First, he would have questioned the possibility of any political party being capable of operating in ways to strengthen soviet institutions. While the "vanguard party" might be formally committed to such intervention, Weber would argue that unless the leadership of the party were somehow systematically held accountable for their actions, there would be no guarantee that they would not themselves undermine soviet institutions. This would be especially likely since, like all mass organizations in modern society, the party itself would, in Weber's view, inevitably become bureaucratized. Second, Weber would strongly differ with Lenin's view of the relationship of direct democracy to bureaucratic growth: far from reducing bureaucratic tendencies, soviet institutions and all other forms of direct democracy (or plebiscitary democracy) in fact tend to increase bureaucratization. Thus, there is a fundamental contradiction in soviet organization, Weber would argue: on the one hand, soviets increase workers' *formal* participation in government and make the state seem much more democratic; on the other hand, soviet institutions would significantly increase bureaucracy, thus reducing substantive democracy and the real power of the working class.

Lenin never really provided a systematic answer to the first criticism, at least not in *The State and Revolution*. His fundamental belief was that the vanguard party, in which he had

enormous faith, would in fact function as a positive force for building soviet institutions, but he provides little reasoning to support this belief. In a curious way, the vanguard party occupies a position in Lenin's analysis parallel to the working parliament in Weber's: The party is an elite organization led by professional revolutionaries trained in the art of politics and capable, after the revolution, of providing firm leadership of the state apparatus in the interests of the proletariat. The critical problem is the lack of an adequate theory of the mechanisms which produce and reproduce this "leadership" capacity. For Weber the problem was fairly simple: the competitive political struggle of competing parties within a working parliament provided the structural mechanism whereby such a parliament could generate the necessary leadership to control the bureaucracy. Lenin never develops as specific a notion of precisely how the party would fulfil that role and of what mechanisms would keep the party responsive to the working class.[18]

Against the second criticism Lenin does have an implicit defence which rests on two assumptions: first, a belief in the essential simplicity of the control and accounting functions of administration and the capacity for the average worker to manage such functions; second, a belief that it was only the control and accounting functions, not the "purely technical" functions, that posed a serious threat of bureaucratic anti-democratic power. If both of these assumptions were correct, then it would be reasonable that literate workers, organized in democratic soviets, could gradually take over the control and accounting functions of administration and thus check the tendencies towards bureaucratization. If either assumption is incorrect,

18. Calling the Party the "vanguard" and proclaiming its leadership role does not help to articulate the real mechanisms which substantively tie it to the working class as a class and make the Party a vehicle for meaningful working class rule. Ralph Miliband has formulated this serious problem in Lenin's writings well: "What is the relationship between the *proletariat* whose dictatorship the revolution is deemed to establish, and the *party* which educates, leads, directs, organizes etc.? It is only on the basis of an *assumption* of a symbiotic, organic relationship between the two, that the question vanishes altogether; but while such a relationship may well have existed between the Bolshevik Party and the Russian proletariat in the months before the October Revolution, i.e., when Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution*, the assumption that this kind of relationship can ever be taken as an automatic and permanent fact belongs to the rhetoric of power, not to its reality." See "The State and Revolution", *Monthly Review*, Vol 11, No 11, 1970.

however, then Weber's criticisms would have to be taken more seriously.

The first assumption has a certain face validity to it. Given a general spread of education among workers, a shortening of the work week as a result of production for use instead of exchange and a general ideological commitment for mass participation in such control and accounting functions, it is at least plausible that such activities could be organized eventually in a genuinely democratic manner. While the immediate conditions for such democratic control of control and accounting might have been extremely unfavourable in Russia in 1917—because of mass illiteracy, the small size of the working class, the difficulty in shortening the work week to provide time for politics, etc.—nevertheless the longer term prospects were potentially much brighter.

The second assumption—that experts do not pose a threat of bureaucratic usurpation—is more problematic. Weber's basic argument is that the purely technical expert, by virtue of his necessary control over information and knowledge, his familiarity with the files, etc., is in a strategic position to appropriate power. Certainly the Chinese experiences of the conflict between "reds" and "experts", in which there have occurred strong tendencies for technical experts to encourage the growth of bureaucracy, reflects the potential forces for bureaucratization that lie within what Lenin considered to be the purely technical aspects of administration. While it is still an unresolved question whether or not a revolutionary, mass democratic control of the proletarian state is possible, the organizational problems and contradictions of such control are considerably more complex than Lenin acknowledged.[19]

Let us now look more carefully at the theoretical one-sidedness of Weber's analysis. In some ways Weber is much more slippery than Lenin. Lenin was a political militant. He was interested in highlighting points polemically, not in cov-

19. Lenin might have been correct that pure experts do not pose much of a direct threat of usurping political power. However, because of their positions of control over information, they may potentially be able to undermine or neutralize the political initiative of the working class. In this sense, they have considerable negative power—power to obstruct. This could create a sufficient political vacuum to allow bureaucrats proper to assume a much more important political role.

ering all his tracks for potential scholarly critics. Weber was an academician, who skilfully qualified most of the theoretical claims which he made. While Lenin almost entirely ignored the theoretical problems of organizational contradictions, Weber was careful at least to touch on everything. His problem is generally less one of absolute omissions, than of the relative emphasis and elaboration he gives various theoretical issues. In particular, his analysis lacks a developed conception of social contradictions within which organizational processes occur. This affects Weber's analysis in three inter-related ways.

First, Weber tends to ignore or minimize the relationship of the growth of bureaucracy (and the development of the state apparatus in general) to class struggle in capitalist society. Weber's basic model of bureaucratic development centres on the need for rational, predictable administration for capitalist enterprises to be able to make efficient calculations in their production decisions. The central variable which underlies the explanation is the need for *rationality*. Lenin emphasizes the need in capitalist society for the bureaucratic *repression* of class struggle. Both of these models are developmental and dynamic rather than static, since both of them predict a progressively increasing level of bureaucratization in capitalist society. The difference is that Weber's model describes a harmonious rationalization process, while Lenin's depicts a contradictory social control process. Without denying the validity of Weber's insights, his model clearly represents a one-sided understanding of bureaucracy and the state.

Second, the absence of an elaborated theory of social contradictions raises serious questions about Weber's notion of "responsible" and "effective" political leadership. Weber sets out his argument as if political responsibility, effectiveness and competence are purely technical questions concerning the means rather than the ends of political life. Such political effectiveness, Weber argues, requires political leaders to have certain special skills that enable them to pursue competently whatever political goals they and their party are committed to. However, "responsibility" and "effectiveness" have very different meanings depending upon the total social structure in which that leadership operates. To be a "responsible" and "effective" political leader in the context of parliamentary politics in a

capitalist society *necessarily* implies furthering the *substantive* goals of capitalism by accommodating oppositional forces to the requirements of capitalist social order. This is not because of the malevolence of such party leadership, and it is not because of the purely internal tendencies towards bureaucratization and oligarchy within political organizations. Rather, it is because of the essential content of the processes of political effectiveness and responsibility, given the constraints of operating within the structural framework of capitalist institutions.

As Weber stresses, to be an effective political leader in a parliamentary system means to know how to negotiate compromises and form political alliances. This means that a "responsible" leader must refrain from pursuing demands and goals that are non-negotiable. Once a particular bargain is reached, he must uphold it and try to prevent his constituency and party from undermining it. Leadership effectiveness thus requires the acceptance of political goals that are compatible with the functioning of the existing social order. This does not mean, of course, that change is prohibited, but it does constrain change within limits determined by the structures of capitalist society.

Effectiveness and responsibility are thus not "neutral" dimensions of technical, formal rationality; they intrinsically embody certain broad political orientations. In fact, it can be said that the more responsible and effective the leadership of political parties (of the right and the left) is, the more they will orient their political activity towards consensus, negotiation, compromise, and accommodation, i.e., the more solidly will their goals fall within the limits of system-compatibility. Effectiveness and responsibility thus become transformed into manipulation and mystification.

The easy answer to these objections would be to deny the existence of real social contradictions in a capitalist social order. For if unresolvable class antagonisms do not exist, if there really does exist a potential for genuine social consensus, then the compromises and bargains negotiated through parliamentary politics could be conceived in terms of a purely technical political effectiveness. Although there are parts of Weber's writings that seem to approach this pluralist image of a fundamentally harmonious social order, he more generally

acknowledges the existence of social classes with antagonistic and even irreconcilable class interests. Given this acknowledgement of real class divisions, Weber's plea for responsible, effective political leadership becomes a programme for stabilizing and strengthening capitalist hegemony.

Third, even aside from the question of the meaning of leadership effectiveness and responsibility, Weber's solution to the problem of bureaucratic domination in capitalist society—the creation of strong parliamentary institutions—tends to minimize the relationship of parliamentary institutions to class domination. While Weber does say that a weak parliament is functional for capitalist interests, he definitely does not say that parliaments are weak because of capitalist class domination. They are weak because of weak parliamentary traditions, constitutional obstacles, the policies of particular statesmen, rather than because of the basic requirements of capitalist domination. At best in Weber's discussion of parliaments, such social contradictions are treated as background variables; they are never systematically integrated into his analysis.

Just as Lenin's "solution" in effect abstracts the problems of constructing socialism from the real organizational contradictions of soviet institutions, Weber's "solution" abstracts parliamentary institutions from the social contradictions of capitalist society. While it might be true that a strong working parliament would be an effective check on bureaucracy if such a parliament could exist, it seems highly questionable that such an institution is possible given the contradictions of advanced capitalist society. Weber, of course, was very pessimistic about the long-term durability of parliaments. His pessimism, however, was always based on the organizational problems faced by parliaments when confronting the ever-expanding bureaucracy; he almost never discussed the relationship of parliamentary power to the general social contradictions in capitalist society.

Elements of a Synthesis: Class Struggle and Organizational Structure

Lenin never believed that a socialist revolution would instantly demolish bureaucratic structures. To imagine such an immedi-

ate transformation was, he always insisted, utterly utopian. However, Lenin did not anticipate the durability of bureaucratic structures after the revolution, and he certainly did not expect to see a widening rather than a narrowing of the scope of bureaucracy. In the Eighth Party Congress in 1919, Lenin acknowledged the problem of persistent bureaucracy. "We have been hearing complaints about bureaucracy for a long time," he wrote; "the complaints are undoubtedly well-founded". After briefly discussing the relative success in the debureaucratization of the judicial system, Lenin then went on to explain: "The employees in the other spheres of government are more hardened bureaucrats. The task here is more difficult. We cannot live without this apparatus; every branch of government creates a demand for such an apparatus. Here we are suffering from the fact that Russia was not sufficiently developed as a capitalist country. Germany, apparently, will suffer less from this because her bureaucratic apparatus passed through an extensive school, which sucks people dry but compels them to work and not just wear out armchairs, as happens in our offices."[20] (Lenin, 1965, v. 29:182) Several years later, in a letter concerning the reorganization of the council of people's commissars written in 1922, Lenin seemed much more despondent about the problem: "We are being sucked down by the rotten bureaucratic swamp into writing papers, jawing about decrees, drawing up decrees—and in this sea of paper, live work is being drowned."[21]

How did Lenin explain this persistence of bureaucratic forms and the difficulty of their eradication? Two themes underscore most of his accounts of the problem: (1) the low level of *culture*

20. *Collected Works*. Vol 29, Moscow 1965, p. 182.

21. In this letter Lenin went on to suggest what should be done about the bureaucratic morass: "work out written regulations for the bringing forward and consideration of questions, and check not less than once a month, you personally, whether the regulations are being observed and whether they are achieving their object, i.e., reduction of paper work, red tape, more sense of responsibility on the part of the People's Commissars, replacement of half-baked decrees by careful, prolonged, business-like checking-up on fulfilment and by checking of experience, establishment of personal responsibility (in effect, *we have complete irresponsibility at the top* . . .)" *On the Soviet State Apparatus*, Moscow 1969, pp. 331–332.

Ironically, in Weber's terms Lenin's suggestions amount to an intensification of bureaucratic structures, especially in the injunction to establish written regulations and regular check-ups on their application. It should also be noticed

and education of the Russian masses;[22] and (2) the low level of *economic* and industrial development of the Soviet Union.[23] Nowhere, to my knowledge, does Lenin emphasize the specifically *political* dynamic at work in the reproduction and extension of bureaucratic structures in the post-revolutionary state apparatus.

We thus have a curious irony: Lenin correctly understands that bureaucratic organizations are not technically necessary, but rather are socially generated by the political imperatives of class domination; yet, his explanations of continuing bureaucracy after the revolution are primarily in terms of economic and ideological (cultural) factors, not political ones. Weber, on the other hand, saw bureaucracy as strictly technically-economically necessary, but saw the solutions to the "problem" of bureaucracy in exclusively political terms. While one might

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that in this letter Lenin bemoans the *irresponsibility* of the top of bureaucratic offices, much as Weber criticized the irresponsibility of the top levels of the Prussian bureaucracy.

22. For example, in his discussion of bureaucracy at the Eighth Party Congress, Lenin contrasts the *legal* obstacles to direct democracy in the bourgeois republics with the *cultural* obstacles in the Soviet Republic: "We can fight bureaucracy to the bitter end, to a complete victory, only when the whole population participates in the work of government. In the bourgeois republics not only is this impossible but *the law itself prevents it*. . . . What we have done, was to remove these hindrances, but so far we have not reached the stage at which the working people could participate in government. Apart from the law, there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this cultural level is that the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by the working people*, are in fact organs of government *for the working people* by the advanced sections of the proletariat, but not by the working people as a whole. Here we are confronted by a problem which cannot be solved except by prolonged education." *Collected Works*, Vol 29, p. 183.

23. Aside from frequent general references to the "low level of development", Lenin makes the following specific reference to economic conditions and bureaucracy in his pamphlet "The Tax in Kind": "The evils of bureaucracy are not in the army, but in the institutions serving it. In our country bureaucratic practices have different economic roots [from those in bourgeois republics], namely, the atomised and scattered state of the small producers with their poverty, illiteracy, lack of culture, the absence of roads and *exchange* between agriculture and industry, the absence of connection and interaction between them." At the end of the essay he suggests that trade and exchange relations would help to alleviate bureaucratic evils: "Exchange is freedom of trade; it is capitalism. It is useful to us inasmuch as it will help us overcome the dispersal of the small producer, and to a certain degree combat the evils of bureaucracy; to what extent this can be done will be determined by practical experience." *Collected Works*, Vol 32, p. 351.

be able to explain this absence of a political discussion of bureaucracy in Lenin after the revolution in terms of the political conditions and struggles which he faced, nevertheless, the absence of such an analysis leaves his theory of bureaucracy seriously incomplete.

What we need to do, therefore, is to link more systematically the social-economic determinants of bureaucratic structure to the political determinants. The model of determination in Figure 4.1 attempts to lay out the basic shape of these relationships. Of particular importance in the present context are the diverse ways in which the forms of political class struggle are linked to the social-economic structure, the political organizational capacities of classes and the bureaucratic structure of the state. First, the forms of political class struggle are structurally limited by the underlying social-economic structure, and structurally selected by the organizational capacities of classes and the structure of the state apparatus. Secondly, political class struggle transforms the social-economic structure, political capacities and the structure of the state itself. Finally, the forms of political struggle mediate the relations of determination between the social-economic structure, political capacities and the structure of the state. Most importantly in the present discussion, this means that depending upon the nature of these struggles, the effects on state structures of the same underlying social-economic conditions will be different.

In terms of this heuristic model, Weber's analysis can be seen as primarily examining the linkages on the outside of the diagram. Weber paid particular attention to the ways in which social-economic conditions (or more precisely, technical-economic conditions) set limits on the structure of the state (rationalization and bureaucratization in response to the technical needs of industrial society); and the ways in which the political organizational capacities (the strength and vitality of parliamentary institutions) selects specific kinds of bureaucratic structures from within those limits (greater or lesser control of the bureaucracy by responsible, political leadership). Lenin was also concerned with the relationship of the social-economic structure to the structure of the state apparatuses (capitalist class domination produces bureaucratic administration), but he was much more interested than Weber with the

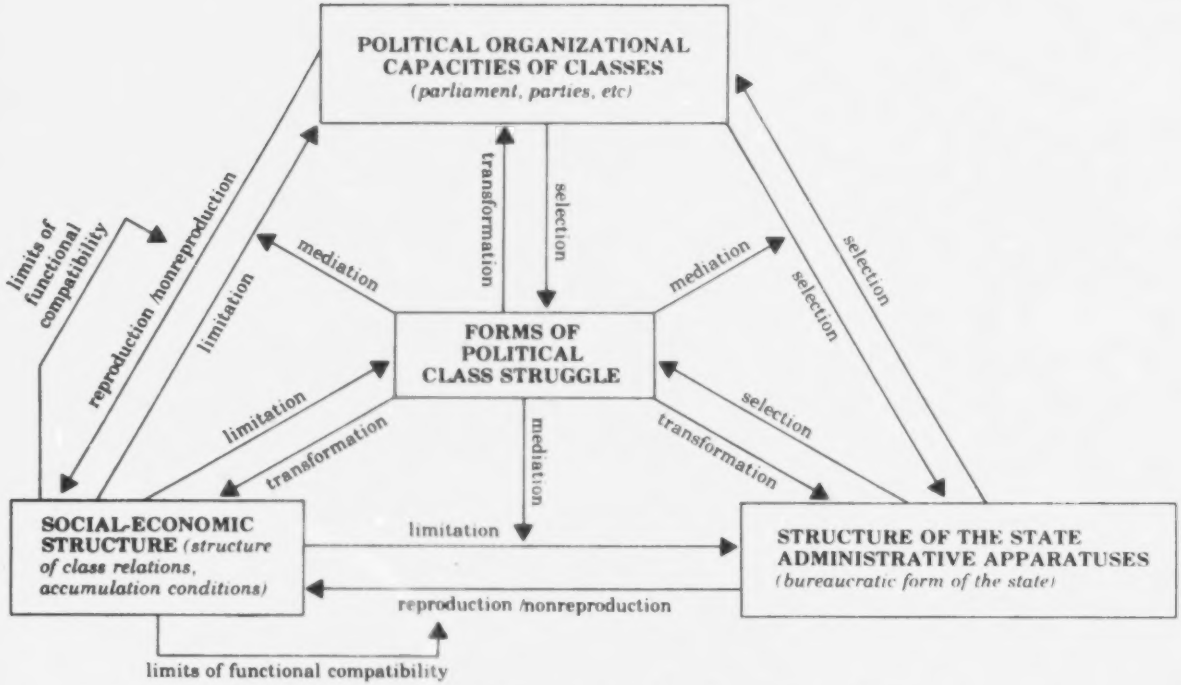


Figure 4.1 Model of Determination of the Bureaucratic Structure of the State Apparatuses

inside of the diagram: the ways in which class struggle is shaped by social and political structures and the ways in which class struggle transforms those structures.

Neither theorist, however, explicitly grappled with the relationship of mediation in a systematic way. It is this relationship which is particularly important in understanding the resilience of bureaucratic organization in the post-revolutionary period in the Soviet Union. Lenin was absolutely correct that the low cultural and economic level of Russia meant that it would be impossible immediately to destroy bureaucratic structures in the state, and that as a result it was of tremendous importance to create the economic and ideological preconditions for a full transition to socialism. What Lenin underestimated, however, was the importance of creating the political preconditions for the control of bureaucratic structures. In the terms of the present discussion, this would have meant specifying how political struggles could mediate the relationship of economic and cultural conditions to state structures and thus affect the shape and strength of those inevitable bureaucratic structures. To the extent that Lenin saw the problem in political terms, it was mainly as a "selection" problem: i.e., how the party might intervene in various bureaucratic organizations to improve the quality of their administration, to eliminate excesses, etc. (see footnote 20 above). He did not see this problem primarily in terms of a genuine political mediation process.

If this is the correct way to pose the problem of the relationship of political struggle to bureaucratization, then the question is: what kind of mediation was necessary? What forms of political struggle could have had the result of reducing the pressures towards bureaucratic expansion generated by economic and social conditions? What developments in the post-1917 period were most decisive in shaping the political mediations which actually did occur? Without pretending to have an adequate answer to these questions, it can be said that the progressive erosion of intra-party democracy as well as inter-party competition (i.e., the prohibition on the formation of intra-party factions and the abolition of all parties other than the Bolsheviks) were among the key developments in this process of political mediation. A deeper form of proletarian democracy would not have eliminated bureaucracy; and it would not

necessarily have guaranteed that the bureaucracy which continued to function would have been more efficient. But it would have changed the political terrain on which that bureaucracy was reproduced, by creating a broader mass of politically trained and sophisticated workers. This is not to say that such choices *could* have been made by the young Soviet Republic given the enormous pressures which it confronted. It might well have been utopian to attempt a thorough-going proletarian democracy in the 1920s. But whatever the causes of the choices which were made, the longer term consequence of the specific political mediations which historically emerged after the Revolution was to reproduce and strengthen bureaucracy and to undermine the political capacity of the working class.

This is the fundamental truth to Weber's analysis: bureaucratic power feeds on the political incapacity of non-bureaucrats and reinforces that incapacity. In his analysis, the pivotal category of non-bureaucrats was the parliamentary elite, and thus he was preoccupied with the problem of how to develop their political capacity. Within Marxist theory, the critical category of non-bureaucrats is the working class. The decisive question is, therefore, how to develop and strengthen the political capacity of this class, i.e., how to forge strong and meaningful social relations among workers at the political level. This can only be accomplished through the direct participation of workers in political struggles and political organizations —which means that after a socialist revolution, it is essential that the institutions of proletarian democracy be constantly defended and deepened.

In the following chapter we will examine what such political mediation means in contemporary capitalist societies.

Source: E. O. Wright, 'Bureaucracy and the state', *Class, Crisis and the State*, New Left Books, London, 1978, pp. 181–225.

3

What does a crisis mean today?: Legitimation problems in late capitalism

Jurgen Habermas

THE expression "late capitalism" implicitly asserts that, even in state-regulated capitalism, social developments are still passing through "contradictions" or crises. I would therefore like to begin by elucidating the concept of *crisis*.

Prior to its use in economics, we are familiar with the concept of crisis in medicine. It refers to that phase of a disease in which it is decided whether the self-healing powers of the organism are sufficient for recovery. The critical process, the disease, seems to be something objective. A contagious disease, for instance, affects the organism from outside. The deviations of the organism from what it should be—i.e., the patient's normal condition—can be observed and, if necessary, measured with the help of indicators. The patient's consciousness plays no part in this. *How* the patient feels and *how* he experiences his illness is at most a symptom of events that he himself can barely influence. Nevertheless, we would not speak of a crisis in a medical situation of life or death if the patient were not trapped in this process with all his subjectivity. A crisis cannot be separated from the victim's inner view. He experiences his impotence toward the objectivity of his illness only because he is a subject doomed to passivity and temporarily unable to be a subject in full possession of his strength.

Crisis suggests the notion of an objective power depriving a subject of part of his normal sovereignty. If we interpret a process as a crisis, we are tacitly giving it a normative meaning. When the crisis is resolved, the trapped subject is liberated.

This becomes clearer when we pass from the medical to the dramaturgical notion of crisis. In classical aesthetics from Aristotle to Hegel, crisis signifies the turning point of a fateful process which, although fully objective, does not simply break in from the outside. There is a contradiction expressed in the catastrophic culmination of a conflict of action, and that contradiction is inherent in the very structure of the system of action and in the personality systems of the characters. Fate is revealed in conflicting norms that destroy the identities of the characters unless they in turn manage to regain their freedom by smashing the mythical power of fate.

The notion of crisis developed by classical tragedy has its counterpart in the notion of crisis to be found in the doctrine of salvation. Recurring throughout the philosophy of history in the eighteenth century, this figure of thought enters the evolutionary social theories of the nineteenth century. Marx is the first to develop a sociological concept of system crisis. It is against that background that we now speak of social or economic crises. In any discussion of, say, the great economic crisis in the early 'thirties, the Marxist overtones are unmistakable.

Since capitalist societies have the capacity of steadily developing technological productive forces, Marx conceives an economic crisis as a *crisis-ridden process of economic growth*. Accumulation of capital is tied to the acquisition of surplus. This means for Marx that economic growth is regulated by a mechanism that both establishes and conceals a power relationship. Thus the model of rising complexity is contradictory in the sense that the economic system keeps creating new and more problems as it solves others. The total accumulation of capital passes through periodic devaluations of capital components: this forms the cycle of crises, which Marx in his time was able to observe. He tried to explain the classical type of crisis by applying the theory of value with the help of the law of the tendential fall of the rate of profit. But that is outside my purpose at the moment. My question is really: Is late capitalism following the same or similar self-destruc-

tive pattern of development as classical—i.e., competitive—capitalism? Or has the organizing principle of late capitalism changed so greatly that the accumulation process no longer generates any problems jeopardizing its existence?

My starting point will be a rough descriptive model of the most important structural features of late-capitalist societies. I will then mention three crisis tendencies which today, though not specific to the system, are major topics of discussion. And finally, I will deal with various explanations of the crisis tendencies in late capitalism.

Structural Features of Late-Capitalist Societies

The expression "organized or state-regulated capitalism" refers to two classes of phenomena both of which can be traced back to the advanced stage of the accumulation process. One such class is the process of economic concentration (the creation of national and by now even multinational corporations) and the organization of markets for goods, capital, and labor. On the other hand, the interventionist state keeps filling the increasing functional gaps in the market. The spread of oligopolistic market structures certainly spells the end of competitive capitalism. But no matter how far companies may see into the future or extend their control over the environment, the steering mechanism of the market will continue to function as long as investments are determined by company profits. At the same time, by complementing and partially replacing the market mechanism, government intervention means the end of liberal capitalism. But no matter how much the state may restrict the owner of goods in his private autonomous activity, there will be no political planning to allocate scarce resources as long as the overall societal priorities develop naturally—i.e., as indirect results of the strategies of private enterprise. In advanced capitalist societies, the economic, the administrative, and the legitimation systems can be characterized as follows.

The Economic System. During the 1960s, various authors, using the example of the United States, developed a three-sector model based on the distinction between the private and public areas. Private production is market-oriented, one sector still regulated by competition, another by the market strategies of the oligopolies that tolerate a competitive fringe. However, the public area, especially in the wake of armament and space-travel production, has witnessed the rise of great industries which, in their investment decisions, can operate independently of the market. These are either enterprises directly controlled by the government or private firms living on government contracts. The monopolistic and the public sectors are dominated by capital-intensive industries; the competitive sector is dominated by labor-intensive industries. In the monopolistic and the public sectors, the industries are faced with powerful unions. But in the competitive sector, labor is not as well organized, and the salary levels are correspondingly different. In the monopolistic sector, we can observe relatively rapid progress in production. However, in the public sector, the companies do not *need* to be, and in the competitive sector they *cannot* be, that efficient.

The Administrative System. The state apparatus regulates the overall economic cycle by means of global planning. On the other hand, it also improves the conditions for utilizing capital.

Global planning is limited by private autonomous use of the means of production (the investment freedom of private enterprises cannot be restricted). It is limited on the other hand by the general purpose of crisis management. There are fiscal and financial measures to regulate cycles, as well as individual measures to regulate investments and overall demand (credits, price guarantees, subsidies, loans, secondary redistribution of income, government contracts based on business-cycle policies, indirect labor-market policies, etc.). All these measures have the reactive character of avoidance strategies within the context of a well-known preference system. This system is determined by a didactically demanded compromise between competing impera-

tives: steady growth, stability of money value, full employment, and balance of trade.

Global planning manipulates the marginal conditions of decisions made by private enterprise. It does so in order to *correct* the market mechanism by neutralizing dysfunctional side effects. The state, however, *supplants* the market mechanism wherever the government creates and improves conditions for utilizing excess accumulated capital. It does so:

- by "strengthening the competitive capacity of the nation," by organizing supranational economic blocks, by an imperialistic safeguarding of international stratification, etc.;
- by unproductive government consumption (armament and space-travel industry);
- by politically structured guidance of capital in sectors neglected by an autonomous market;
- by improving the material infrastucture (transportation, education and health, vocation centers, urban and regional planning, housing, etc.);
- by improving the immaterial infrastructure (promotion of scientific research, capital expenditure in research and development, intermediary of patents, etc.);
- by increasing the productivity of human labor (universal education, vocational schooling, programs of training and re-education, etc.);
- by paying for the social costs and real consequences of private production (unemployment, welfare; ecological damage).

The Legitimation System. With the functional weaknesses of the market and the dysfunctional side effects of the market mechanism, the basic bourgeois ideology of fair exchange also collapsed. Yet there is a need for even greater legitimation. The government apparatus no longer merely safeguards the prerequisites for the production process. It also, on its own initiative, intervenes in that process. It must therefore be legitimated in the growing realms of state intervention, even though there is now no possibility of reverting to the traditions that have been under-

mined and worn out in competitive capitalism. The universalistic value systems of bourgeois ideology have made civil rights, including suffrage, universal. Independent of general elections, legitimation can thus be gotten only in extraordinary circumstances and temporarily. The resulting problem is resolved through formal democracy.

A wide participation by the citizens in the process of shaping political will—i.e., genuine democracy—would have to expose the contradiction between administratively socialized production and a still private form of acquiring the produced values. In order to keep the contradiction from being thematized, one thing is necessary. The administrative system has to be sufficiently independent of the shaping of legitimating will. This occurs in a legitimation process that elicits mass loyalty but avoids participation. In the midst of an objectively politicized society, the members enjoy the status of passive citizens with the right to withhold their acclaim. The private autonomous decision about investments is complemented by the civil privatism of the population.

Class Structure. The structures of late capitalism can be regarded as a kind of reaction formation. To stave off the system crisis, late-capitalist societies focus all socially integrative strength on the conflict that is structurally most probable. They do so in order all the more effectively to keep that conflict latent.

In this connection, an important part is played by the quasi-political wage structure, which depends on negotiations between companies and unions. Price fixing, which has replaced price competition in the oligopolistic markets, has its counterpart in the labor market. The great industries almost administratively control the prices in their marketing territories. Likewise, through wage negotiations, they achieve quasi-political compromises with their union adversaries. In those industrial branches of the monopolistic and public sectors that are crucial to economic development, the commodity known as labor has a "political" price. The "wage-scale partners" find a broad zone of compromise, since increased labor costs can be passed on into the prices, and the middle-

range demands made by both sides against the government tend to converge. The main consequences of immunizing the original conflict zone are as follows: (1) disparate wage developments; (2) a permanent inflation with the corresponding short-lived redistribution of incomes to the disadvantage of unorganized wage earners and other marginal groups; (3) a permanent crisis in government finances, coupled with public poverty—i.e., pauperization of public transportation, education, housing, and health; (4) an insufficient balance of disproportionate economic developments, both sectoral (e.g., agriculture) and regional (marginal areas).

Since World War II, the most advanced capitalist countries have kept the class conflict latent in its essential areas. They have extended the business cycle, transforming the periodic pressures of capital devaluation into a permanent inflationary crisis with milder cyclical fluctuations. And they have filtered down the dysfunctional side effects of the intercepted economic crisis and scattered them over quasi-groups (such as consumers, school children and their parents, transportation users, the sick, the elderly) or divided groups difficult to organize. This process breaks down the social identity of the classes and fragments class conciousness. In the class compromise now part of the structure of late capitalism, nearly everyone both participates and is affected as an individual—although, with the clear and sometimes growing unequal distribution of monetary values and power, one can well distinguish between those belonging more to the one or to the other category.

Three Developing Crises

The rapid growth processes of late-capitalist societies have confronted the system of world society with new problems. These problems cannot be regarded as crisis phenomena specific to the system, even though the possibilities of coping with the crises *are* specific to the system and therefore limited. I am thinking of

the disturbance of the ecological balance, the violation of the personality system (alienation), and the explosive strain on international relations.

The Ecological Balance. If physically economic growth can be traced back to the technologically sophisticated use of more energy to increase the productivity of human labor, then the societal formation of capitalism is remarkable for impressively solving the problem of economic growth. To be sure, capital accumulation originally pushes economic growth ahead, so there is no option for the conscious steering of this process. The growth imperatives originally followed by capitalism have meanwhile achieved a global validity by way of system competition and worldwide diffusion (despite the stagnation or even retrogressive trends in some Third World countries).

The mechanisms of growth are forcing an increase of both population and production on a worldwide scale. The economic needs of a growing population and the productive exploitation of nature are faced with material restrictions: on the one hand, finite resources (cultivable and inhabitable land, fresh water, metals, minerals, etc.); on the other hand, irreplaceable ecological systems that absorb pollutants such as fallout, carbon dioxide, and waste heat. Forrester and others have estimated the limits of the exponential growth of population, industrial production, exploitation of natural resources, and environmental pollution. To be sure, their estimates have rather weak empirical foundations. The mechanisms of population growth are as little known as the maximum limits of the earth's potential for absorbing even the major pollutants. Moreover, we cannot forecast technological development accurately enough to know which raw materials will be replaced or renovated by future technology.

However, despite any optimistic assurances, we are able to indicate (if not precisely determine) *one* absolute limitation on growth: the thermal strain on the environment due to consumption of energy. If economic growth is necessarily coupled with increasing consumption of energy, and if all natural energy that

is transformed into economically useful energy is ultimately released as heat, it will eventually raise the temperature of the atmosphere. Again, determining the deadline is not easy. Nevertheless, these reflections show that an exponential growth of population and production—i.e., an expanded control over external nature—will some day run up against the limits of the biological capacity of the environment.

This is not limited to complex societal systems. Specific to these systems are the possibilities of warding off dangers to the ecology. Late-capitalist societies would have a very hard time limiting growth without abandoning their principle of organization, because an overall shift from spontaneous capitalist growth to qualitative growth would require production planning in terms of use-values.

The Anthropological Balance. While the disturbance of the ecological balance points out the negative aspect of the exploitation of natural resources, there are no sure signals for the capacity limits of personality systems. I doubt whether it is possible to identify such things as psychological constants of human nature that inwardly limit the socialization process. I do, however, see a limitation in the kind of socializing that societal systems have been using to create motives for action. Our behavior is oriented by norms requiring justification and by interpretative systems guaranteeing identity. Such a communicative organization of behavior can become an obstacle in complex societies for a simple reason. The adaptive capacity in organizations increases proportionately as the administrative authorities become independent of the particular motivations of the members. The choice and achievement of organization goals in systems of high intrinsic complexity have to be independent of the influx of narrowly delimited motives. This requires a generalized willingness to comply (in political systems, such willingness has the form of legitimation). As long as socialization brings inner nature into a communicative behavioral organization, no legitimation for norms of action could conceivably secure an unmotivated acceptance of decisions. In

regard to decisions whose contents are still undetermined, people will comply if convinced that those decisions are based on a legitimate norm of action. If the motives for acting were no longer to pass through norms requiring justification, and if the personality structures no longer had to find their unity under interpretative systems guaranteeing identity, then (and only then) the unmotivated acceptance of decisions would become an irreproachable routine, and the readiness to comply could thus be produced to any desirable degree.

The International Balance. The dangers of destroying the world system with thermonuclear weapons are on a different level. The accumulated potential for annihilation is a result of the advanced stage of productive forces. Its basis is technologically neutral, and so the productive forces can also take the form of destructive forces (which has happened because international communication is still undeveloped). Today, mortal damage to the natural substratum of global society is quite possible. International communication is therefore governed by a historically new imperative of self-limitation. Once again, this is not limited to all highly militarized societal systems, but the possibilities of tackling this problem have limits specific to the systems. An actual disarmament may be unlikely because of the forces behind capitalist and postcapitalist class societies. Yet regulating the arms race is not basically incompatible with the structure of late-capitalist societies if it is possible to increase technologically the use-value of capital to the degree that the capacity effect of the government's demand for unproductive consumer goods can be balanced.

Disturbances Specific to the System

I would now like to leave these three global consequences of late-capitalist growth and investigate disturbances specific to the system. I will start with a thesis, widespread among Marxists, that the basic capitalist structures continue unaltered and create eco-

nomic crises in altered manifestations. In late capitalism, the state pursues the politics of capital with other means. This thesis occurs in two versions.

Orthodox state-theory maintains that the activities of the interventionist state, no less than the exchange processes in liberal capitalism, obey economic laws. The altered manifestations (the crisis of state finances and permanent inflation, growing disparities between public poverty and private wealth, etc.) are due to the fact that the self-regulation of the realization process is governed by power rather than by exchange. However, the crisis tendency is determined, as much as ever, by the law of value, the structurally forced asymmetry in the exchange of wage labor for capital. As a result, state activity cannot permanently compensate for the tendency of falling rates of profit. It can at best mediate that trend—i.e., consummate it with political means. The replacement of market functions by state functions does not alter the unconscious nature of the overall economic process. This is shown by the narrow limits of the state's possibilities for manipulation. The state cannot substantially intervene in the property structure without causing an investment strike. Neither can it manage to permanently avoid cyclical stagnation tendencies of the accumulation process—i.e., stagnation tendencies that are created endogenously.

A revisionist version of the Marxist theory of the state is current among leading economists in the German Democratic Republic. According to this version, the state apparatus, instead of naturally obeying the logic of the law of value, is consciously supporting the interests of united monopoly capitalists. This agency theory, adapted to late capitalism, regards the state not as a blind organ of the realization process but as a potent supreme capitalist who makes the accumulation of capital the substance of his political planning. The high degree of the socialization of production brings together the individual interests of the large corporations and the interest in maintaining the system. And all the more so because its existence is threatened internally by forces

transcending the system. This leads to an overall capitalist interest, which the united monopolies sustain with the aid of the state apparatus.

I consider both versions of the theory of economic crises inadequate. One version underestimates the state, the other overestimates it.

In regard to the orthodox thesis, I wonder if the state-controlled organization of scientific and technological progress and the system of collective bargaining (a system producing a class compromise, especially in the capital- and growth-intensive economic sectors) have not altered the mode of production. The state, having been drawn into the process of production, has modified the determinants of the process of utilizing capital. On the basis of a partial class compromise, the administrative system has gained a limited planning capacity. This can be used within the framework of the democratic acquisition of legitimation for purposes of reactive avoidance of crises. The cycle of crises is deactivated and rendered less harmful in its social consequences. It is replaced by inflation and a permanent crisis of public finances. The question as to whether these surrogates indicate a successful halting of the economic crisis or merely its temporary shift into the political system is an empirical one. Ultimately, this depends on whether the indirectly productive capital invested in research, development, and education can continue the process of accumulation. It can manage to do so by making labor more productive, raising the rate of surplus value, and cheapening the fixed components of capital.

The revisionist theory has elicited the following reservations. For one thing, we cannot empirically support the assumption that the state apparatus, no matter in whose interest, can actively plan, as well as draft and carry through, a central economic strategy. The theory of state-monopoly capitalism (akin to Western theories of technocracy) fails to recognize the limits of administrative planning in late capitalism. Bureaucracies for planning always reactively avoid crises. The various bureau-

cracies are not fully coordinated, and because of their limited capacity for perceiving and steering, they tend to depend largely on the influence of their clients. It is because of this very inefficiency that organized partial interests have a chance to penetrate the administrative apparatus. Nor can we empirically support the other assumption that the state is active as the agent of the united monopolists. The theory of state-monopoly capitalism (akin to Western elite theories) overrates the significance of personal contacts and direct influence. Studies on the recruiting, make-up, and interaction of the various power elites fail to cogently explain the functional connections between the economic and administrative systems.

In my opinion, the late-capitalist state can be properly understood neither as the unconscious executive organ of economic laws nor as a systematic agent of the united monopoly capitalists. Instead, I would join Claus Offe in advocating the theory that late-capitalist societies are faced with two difficulties caused by the state's having to intervene in the growing functional gaps of the market. We can regard the state as a system that uses legitimate power. Its output consists in sovereignly executing administrative decisions. To this end, it needs an input of mass loyalty that is as unspecific as possible. Both directions can lead to crisislike disturbances. Output crises have the form of the efficiency crisis. The administrative system fails to fulfill the steering imperative that it has taken over from the economic system. This results in the disorganization of different areas of life. Input crises have the form of the legitimation crisis. The legitimation system fails to maintain the necessary level of mass loyalty. We can clarify this with the example of the acute difficulties in public finances, with which all late-capitalist societies are now struggling.

The government budget, as I have said, is burdened with the public expenses of an increasingly socialized production. It bears the costs of international competition and of the demand for unproductive consumer goods (armament and space travel). It bears the costs for the infrastructural output (transportation and

communication, scientific and technological progress, vocational training). It bears the costs of the social consumption indirectly concerned with production (housing, transportation, health, leisure, general education, social security). It bears the costs of providing for the unemployed. And finally, it bears the externalized costs of environmental damage caused by private production. Ultimately, these expenses have to be met by taxes. The state apparatus thus has two simultaneous tasks. It has to levy the necessary taxes from profits and income and employ them so efficiently as to prevent any crises from disturbing growth. In addition the selective raising of taxes, the recognizable priority model of their utilization, and the administrative performance have to function in such a way as to satisfy the resulting need for legitimation. If the state fails in the former task, the result is a deficit in administrative efficiency. If it fails in the latter task, the result is a deficit in legitimation.

Theorems of the Legitimation Crisis

I would like to restrict myself to the legitimation problem. There is nothing mysterious about its genesis. Legitimate power has to be available for administrative planning. The functions accruing to the state apparatus in late capitalism and the expansion of social areas treated by administration increase the need for legitimation. Liberal capitalism constituted itself in the forms of bourgeois democracy, which is easy to explain in terms of the bourgeois revolution. As a result, the growing need for legitimation now has to work with the means of political democracy (on the basis of universal suffrage). The formal democratic means, however, are expensive. After all, the state apparatus does not just see itself in the role of the supreme capitalist facing the conflicting interests of the various capital factions. It also has to consider the generalizable interests of the population as far as necessary to retain mass loyalty and prevent a conflict-ridden

withdrawal of legitimation. The state has to gauge these three interest areas (individual capitalism, state capitalism, and generalizable interests), in order to find a compromise for competing demands. A theorem of crisis has to explain not only why the state apparatus encounters difficulties but also why certain problems remain unsolved in the long run.

First, an obvious objection. The state can avoid legitimation problems to the extent that it can manage to make the administrative system independent of the formation of legitimating will. To that end, it can, say, separate expressive symbols (which create a universal willingness to follow) from the instrumental functions of administration. Well known strategies of this sort are: the personalizing of objective issues, the symbolic use of inquiries, expert opinions, legal incantations, etc. Advertising techniques, borrowed from oligopolistic competition, both confirm and exploit current structures of prejudice. By resorting to emotional appeals, they arouse unconscious motives, occupy certain contents positively, and devalue others. The public, which is engineered for purposes of legitimation, primarily has the function of structuring attention by means of areas of themes and thereby of pushing uncomfortable themes, problems, and arguments below the threshold of attention. As Niklas Luhmann put it: The political system takes over tasks of *ideology planning*.

The scope for manipulation, however, is narrowly delimited, for the cultural system remains peculiarly resistant to administrative control. There is no administrative creation of meaning, there is at best an ideological erosion of cultural values. The acquisition of legitimation is self-destructive as soon as the mode of acquisition is exposed. Thus, there is a systematic limit for attempts at making up for legitimation deficits by means of well aimed manipulation. This limit is the structural dissimilarity between areas of administrative action and cultural tradition.

A crisis argument, to be sure, can be constructed out of these considerations only with the viewpoint that the expansion of state activity has the side effect of disproportionately increasing the need

for legitimation. I regard such an overproportionate increase as likely because things that are taken for granted culturally, and have so far been external conditions of the political systems, are now being drawn into the planning area of administration. This process thematizes traditions which previously were not part of public programming, much less of practical discourse. An example of such direct administrative processing of cultural tradition is educational planning, especially the planning of the curriculum. Hitherto, the school administration merely had to codify a given naturally evolved canon. But now the planning of the curriculum is based on the premise that the tradition models can also be different. Administrative planning creates a universal compulsion for justification toward a sphere that was actually distinguished by the power of self-legitimation.

In regard to the direct disturbance of things that were culturally taken for granted, there are further examples in regional and urban planning (private ownership of land), health planning ("classless hospital"), and family planning and marriage-law planning (which are shaking sexual taboos and facilitating emancipation).

An awareness of contingency is created not just for contents of tradition but also for the techniques of tradition—i.e., socialization. Among preschool children, formal schooling is already competing with family upbringing. The new problems afflicting the educational routine, and the widespread awareness of these problems, are reflected by, among other indications, a new type of pedagogical and psychological writing addressed to the general public.

On all these levels, administrative planning has unintentional effects of disquieting and publicizing. These effects weaken the justification potential of traditions that have been forced out of their natural condition. Once they are no longer indisputable, their demands for validity can be stabilized only by way of discourse. Thus, the forcible shift of things that have been culturally taken for granted further politicizes areas of life that pre-

viously could be assigned to the private domain. However, this spells danger for bourgeois privatism, which is informally assured by the structures of the public. I see signs of this danger in strivings for participation and in models for alternatives, such as have developed particularly in secondary and primary schools, in the press, the church, theaters, publishing, etc.

These arguments support the contention that late-capitalist societies are afflicted with serious problems of legitimation. But do these arguments suffice to explain why these problems cannot be solved? Do they explain the prediction of a crisis in legitimation? Let us assume the state apparatus could succeed in making labor more productive and in distributing the gains in productivity in such a way as to assure an economic growth free of crises (if not disturbances). Such growth would nevertheless proceed in terms of priorities independent of the generalizable interests of the population. The priority models that Galbraith has analyzed from the viewpoint of "private wealth vs. public poverty" result from a class structure which, as always, is still being kept latent. This structure is ultimately the cause of the legitimation deficit.

We have seen that the state cannot simply take over the cultural system and that, in fact, the expansion of areas for state planning creates problems for things that are culturally taken for granted. "Meaning" is an increasingly scarce resource. Which is why those expectations that are governed by concrete and identifiable needs—i.e., that can be checked by their success—keep mounting in the civil population. The rising level of aspirations is proportionate to the growing need for legitimation. The resource of "value," siphoned off by the tax office, has to make up for the scanty resource of "meaning." Missing legitimations have to be replaced by social rewards such as money, time, and security. A crisis of legitimation arises as soon as the demands for these rewards mount more rapidly than the available mass of values, or if expectations come about that are different and cannot be satisfied by those categories of rewards conforming with the present system.

Why, then, should not the level of demands keep within operable limits? As long as the welfare state's programming in connection with a widespread technocratic consciousness (which makes uninfluenceable system-restraints responsible for bottlenecks) maintains a sufficient amount of civil privatism, then the legitimation emergencies do not have to turn into crises. To be sure, the democratic form of legitimation could cause expenses that cannot be covered if that form drives the competing parties to outdo one another in their platforms and thereby raise the expectations of the population higher and higher. Granted, this argument could be amply demonstrated empirically. But we would still have to explain why late-capitalist societies even bother to retain formal democracy. Merely in terms of the administrative system, formal democracy could just as easily be replaced by a variant—a conservative, authoritarian welfare state that reduces the political participation of the citizens to a harmless level; or a Fascist authoritarian state that keeps the population toeing the mark on a relatively high level of permanent mobilization. Evidently, both variants are in the long run less compatible with developed capitalism than a party state based on mass democracy. The sociocultural system creates demands that cannot be satisfied in authoritarian systems.

This reflection leads me to the following thesis: Only a rigid sociocultural system, incapable of being randomly functionalized for the needs of the administrative system, could explain how legitimation difficulties result in a legitimation crisis. This development must therefore be based on a *motivation crisis*—i.e., a discrepancy between the need for motives that the state and the occupational system announce and the supply of motivation offered by the sociocultural system.

Theorems of the Motivation Crisis

The most important motivation contributed by the sociocultural system in late-capitalist societies consists in syndromes of civil and family/vocational privatism. Civil privatism means

strong interests in the administrative system's output and minor participation in the process of will-formation (high-output orientation vs. low-input orientation). Civil privatism thus corresponds to the structures of a depoliticized public. Family and vocational privatism complements civil privatism. It consists of a family orientation with consumer and leisure interests, and of a career orientation consistent with status competition. This privatism thus corresponds to the structures of educational and occupational systems regulated by competitive performance.

The motivational syndromes mentioned are vital to the political and economic system. However, bourgeois ideologies have components directly relevant to privatistic orientations, and social changes deprive those components of their basis. A brief outline may clarify this.

Performance Ideology. According to bourgeois notions which have remained constant from the beginnings of modern natural law to contemporary election speeches, social rewards should be distributed on the basis of individual achievement. The distribution of gratifications should correlate to every individual's performance. A basic condition is equal opportunity to participate in a competition which is regulated in such a way that external influences can be neutralized. One such allocation mechanism was the market. But ever since the general public realized that social violence is practiced in the forms of exchange, the market has been losing its credibility as a mechanism for distributing rewards based on performance. Thus, in the more recent versions of performance ideology, market success is being replaced by the professional success mediated by formal schooling. However, *this* version can claim credibility only when the following conditions have been fulfilled:

- equal opportunity of access to higher schools;
- nondiscriminatory evaluation standards for school performance;
- synchronic developments of the educational and occupational systems;

- work processes whose objective structure permits evaluation according to performances that can be ascribed to individuals.

"School justice" in terms of opportunity of access and standards of evaluation has increased in all advanced capitalist societies at least to some degree. But a countertrend can be observed in the two other dimensions. The expansion of the educational system is becoming more and more independent of changes in the occupational system, so that ultimately the connection between formal schooling and professional success will most likely loosen. At the same time, there are more and more areas in which production structures and work dynamics make it increasingly difficult to evaluate individual performance. Instead, the extrafunctional elements of occupational roles are becoming more and more important for conferring occupational status.

Moreover, fragmented and monotonous work processes are increasingly entering sectors in which previously a personal identity could be developed through the vocational role. An intrinsic motivation for performance is getting less and less support from the structure of the work process in market-dependent work areas. An instrumentalist attitude toward work is spreading even in the traditionally bourgeois professions (white-collar workers, professionals). A performance motivation coming from outside can, however, be sufficiently stimulated by wage income only:

- if the reserve army on the labor market exercises an effective competitive pressure;
- if a sufficient income differential exists between the lower wage groups and the inactive work population.

Both conditions are not necessarily met today. Even in capitalist countries with chronic unemployment (such as the United States), the divsion of the labor market (into organized and competitive sectors) interferes with the natural mechanism of competition. With a mounting poverty line (recognized by the welfare state), the living standards of the lower income groups and the groups temporarily released from the labor process are mutually assimilating on the other side in the subproletarian strata.

Possessive Individualism. Bourgeois society sees itself as an instrumental group that accumulates social wealth only by way of private wealth—i.e., guarantees economic growth and general welfare through competition between strategically acting private persons. Collective goals, under such circumstances, can be achieved only by way of individual utility orientations. This preference system, of course, presupposes:

- that the private economic subjects can with subjective unambiguity recognize and calculate needs that remain constant over given time periods;
- that this need can be satisfied by individually demandable goods (normally, by way of monetary decisions that conform to the system).

Both presuppositions are no longer fulfilled as a matter of course in the developed capitalist societies. These societies have reached a level of societal wealth far beyond warding off a few fundamental hazards to life and the satisfying of basic needs. This is why the individualistic system of preference is becoming vague. The steady interpreting and reinterpreting of needs is becoming a matter of the collective formation of the will, a fact which opens the alternatives of either free and quasi-political communication among consumers as citizens or massive manipulation—i.e., strong indirect steering. The greater the degree of freedom for the preference system of the demanders, the more urgent the problem of sales policies for the suppliers—at least if they are to maintain the illusion that the consumers can make private and autonomous decisions. Opportunistic adjustment of the consumers to market strategies is the ironical form of every consumer autonomy, which is to be maintained as the fac[illegible] of possessive individualism. In addition, with increasing socialization of production, the quota of collective commodities among the consumer goods keeps growing. The urban living conditions in complex societies are more and more dependent on an infrastructure (transportation, leisure, health, education, etc.) that is with-

drawing further and further from the forms of differential demand and private appropriation.

Exchange-value Orientation. Here I have to mention the tendencies that weaken the socialization effects of the market, especially the increase of those parts of the population that do not reproduce their lives through income from work (students, welfare recipients, social-security recipients, invalids, criminals, soldiers, etc.) as well as the expansion of areas of activity in which, as in civil service or in teaching, abstract work is replaced by concrete work. In addition, the relevance that leisure acquires with fewer working hours (and higher real income), compared with the relevance of issues within the occupational sphere of life, does not in the long run privilege those needs that can be satisfied monetarily.

The erosion of bourgeois tradition brings out normative structures that are no longer appropriate to reproducing civil and family and professional privatism. The now dominant components of cultural heritage crystalize around a faith in science, a "postauratic" art, and universalistic values. Irreversible developments have occurred in each of these areas. As a result, functional inequalities of the economic and the political systems are blocked by cultural barriers, and they can be broken down only at the psychological cost of regressions—i.e., with extraordinary motivational damage. German Fascism was an example of the wasteful attempt at a collectively organized regression of consciousness below the thresholds of fundamental scientistic convictions, modern art, and universalistic law and morals.

Scientism. The political consequences of the authority enjoyed by the scientific system in developed societies are ambivalent. The rise of modern science established a demand for discursive justification, and traditionalistic attitudes cannot hold out against that demand. On the other hand, short-lived popular syntheses of scientific data (which have replaced global interpretations) guarantee the authority of science *in the abstract.* The authority known as "science" can thus cover both things: the broadly effective criticism of any prejudice, as well as the new esoterics of

specialized knowledge and expertise. A self-affirmation of the sciences can further a positivistic common sense on the part of the depoliticized public. Yet scientism establishes standards by which it can also be criticized itself and found guilty of residual dogmatism. Theories of technocracy and of democratic elitism, asserting the necessity of an institutionalized civic privatism, come forth with the presumption of theories. But this does not make them immune to criticism.

Postauratic Art. The consequences of modern art are somewhat less ambivalent. The modern age has radicalized the autonomy of bourgeois art in regard to the external purposes for which art could be used. For the first time, bourgeois society itself produced a counterculture against the bourgeois life style of possessive individualism, performance, and practicality. The *Bohème,* first established in Paris, the capital of the nineteenth century, embodies a critical demand that had arisen, unpolemically still, in the aura of the bourgeois artwork. The alter ego of the businessman, the "human being," whom the bourgeois used to encounter in the lonesome contemplation of the artwork, soon split away from him. In the shape of the artistic avant-garde, it confronted him as a hostile, at best seductive force. In artistic beauty, the bourgeoisie had been able to experience its own ideals and the (as always) fictitious redemption of the promise of happiness which was merely suspended in everyday life. In radicalized art, however, the bourgeois soon had to recognize the negation of social practice as its complement.

Modern art is the outer covering in which the transformation of bourgeois art into a counterculture was prepared. Surrealism marks the historical moment when modern art programmatically destroyed the outer covering of no-longer-beautiful illusion in order to enter life desublimated. The leveling of the different reality degrees of art and life was accelerated (although not, as Walter Benjamin assumed, introduced) by the new techniques of mass reproduction and mass reception. Modern art had already sldlighed off the aura of classical bourgeois art in that the art work made the production process visible and presented itself as

a made product. But art enters the ensemble of utility values only when abandoning its autonomous status. The process is certainly ambivalent. It can signify the degeneration of art into a propagandistic mass art or commercialized mass culture, or else its transformation into a subversive counterculture.

Universalist Morality. The blockage which bourgeois ideologies, stripped of their functional components, create for developing the political and economic system, is even clearer in the moral system than in the authority of science and the self-disintegration of modern art. The moment traditional societies enter a process of modernization, the growing complexity results in steering problems that necessitate an accelerated change of social norms. The tempo inherent in natural cultural tradition has to be heightened. This leads to bourgeois formal law which permits releasing the norm contents from the dogmatic structure of mere tradition and defining them in terms of intention. The legal norms are uncoupled from the corps of privatized moral norms. In addition, they need to be created (and justified) according to principles. Abstract law counts only for that area pacified by state power. But the morality of bourgeois private persons, a morality likewise raised to the level of universal principles, encounters no barrier in the continuing natural condition between the states. Since principled morality is sanctioned only by the purely inward authority of the conscience, its claim to universality conflicts with public morality, which is still bound to a concrete state-subject. This is the conflict between the cosmopolitanism of the human being and the loyalties of the citizen.

If we follow the developmental logic of overall societal systems of norms (leaving the area of historical examples), we can settle that conflict. But its resolution is conceivable only under certain conditions. The dichotomy between inner and outer morality has to disappear. The contrast between morally and legally regulated areas has to be relativized. And the validity of *all* norms has to be tied to the discursive formation of the will of the people potentially affected.

Competitive capitalism for the first time gave a binding force to strictly universalistic value systems. This occurred because the system of exchange had to be regulated universalistically and because the exchange of equivalents offered a basic ideology effective in the bourgeois class. In organized capitalism, the bottom drops out of this legitimation model. At the same time, new and increased demands for legitimation arise. However, the system of science cannot intentionally fall behind an attained stage of cumulative knowledge. Similarly, the moral system, once practical discourse has been admitted, cannot simply make us forget a collectively attained stage of moral consciousness.

I would like to conclude with a final reflection.

If no sufficient concordance exists between the normative structures that still have some power today and the politicoeconomic system, then we can still avoid motivation crises by uncoupling the cultural system. Culture would then become a nonobligatory leisure occupation or the object of professional knowledge. This solution would be blocked if the basic convictions of a communicative ethics and the experience complexes of countercultures (in which postauratic art is embodied) acquired a motive-forming power determining typical socialization processes. Such a conjecture is supported by several behavior syndromes spreading more and more among young people—either retreat as a reaction to an exorbitant claim on the personality-resources; or protest as a result of an autonomous ego organization that cannot be stabilized without conflicts under given conditions. On the activist side we find: the student movement, revolts by high-school students and apprentices, pacifists, women's lib. The retreatist side is represented by hippies, Jesus people, the drug subculture, phenomena of undermotivation in schools, etc. These are the primary areas for checking our hypothesis that late-capitalist societies are endangered by a collapse of legitimation.

Source: J. Habermas, 'What does a crisis mean today? Legitimation problems in late capitalism', *Social Research*, vol. 40, 1973, pp. 643–67.

4

Crisis tendencies, legitimation and the state

David Held

Habermas's writings on advanced capitalist societies represent an important contribution to social theory. In conjunction with his colleagues he has helped to direct our understanding of the organisational principles of society away from old dogmas – dogmas asserting, for instance, that the state is merely 'a system of coercion to support the dominant class' or that it is 'a coalition balancing all legitimate interests'. Since the advantages of Habermas's work over less sophisticated approaches have been succinctly emphasised elsewhere, I shall focus this essay, first, on a brief account of his work and, second, on a number of problems which, I think, weaken its utility and scope.[1]

In *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) and *Toward a Rational Society* (a selection of essays written in the latter half of the 1960s but not published in English until 1970), Habermas documents the growth of large-scale economic and commercial organisations, the increasing interdependence of science, technology and industry, the increasing interdependence of state and society, and the extension of instrumental reason (a concern with the adequacy of means to pre-given goals) to ever more areas of life. These developments, he argues, have created a new constellation of economics and politics: 'politics is no longer *only* a phenomenon of the superstructure'.[2] The expansion of the state – symptomatic of the crisis tendencies of capitalist society – leads to an ever greater involvement of administrators and technicians in social and economic affairs.[3] It also leads, in conjunction with the fusion of science, technology and industry, to the emergence of a new form of ideology: ideology is no longer simply based on notions of just exchange but also on a technocratic justification of the social order. A perspective emerges in which political decisions *seem*, as Habermas puts it, 'to be determined by the logic of scientific-technical progress'.[4] Practical issues, underpinned by particular historical class interests, are defined as technical problems: politics becomes the sphere for the technical elimination of dysfunctions and the avoidance of risks that threaten 'the system'.

In his more recent works, *Legitimation Crisis* (1973) and *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979), Habermas seeks to analyse in greater detail changes in contemporary society. He does so in the context of the development of a theory of social evolution. Part of this project involves the identification of (a) the 'possibility spaces', i.e. the potential avenues of development, which a society's 'core structures' create; and (b) the crisis tendencies to which such structures are vulnerable. Although Habermas is concerned to investigate pre-civilisation (primitive communities) and traditional societies, his main focus hitherto has been on modern capitalism. He explores, in particular, the way 'advanced' (or, as he sometimes calls it, 'late' or 'organised') capitalism is susceptible to 'legitimation crisis' – the withdrawal from the existing order of the support or loyalty of the mass of the population as their motivational commitment to its normative basis is broken. It is his contention that the seeds of a new evolutionary development – the overcoming of capitalism's underlying class contradiction – can be uncovered in this and other related crisis tendencies.[5]

Habermas first provides an analysis of liberal capitalism which follows Marx closely.[6] He explicates the organisational principle of this type of society – the principle which circumscribes the 'possibility spaces' of the system – as the *relationship of wage labour and capital*. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is formulated as that between social production and private appropriation, i.e. social production for the enhancement of particular interests. But, as Habermas stresses, a number of questions have to be posed about the contemporary significance of Marx's views. Have events in the last hundred years altered the mode in which the fundamental contradiction of capitalism affects society's dynamic? Has the logic of crisis changed from the path of crisis growth, unstable accumulation, to something fundamentally different? If so, are there consequences for patterns of social struggle? These questions informed Habermas's early writings. However, the way he addresses them from *Legitimation Crisis* onwards represents a marked elaboration of his earlier views.

The model of advanced capitalism Habermas uses follows many well-known recent studies.[7] He begins by delineating three basic sub-systems, the economic, the political-administrative and the socio-cultural. The economic sub-system is itself understood in terms of three sectors: a public sector and two distinct types of private sector. The public sector, i.e. industries such as armaments, is orientated towards state production and consumption. Within the private sector a distinction is made between a sector which is still orientated towards market competition and an oligopolistic sector which is much freer of market constraints. Advanced capitalism, it is claimed, is characterised by capital concentration and the spread of oligopolistic structures.

Habermas contends that crises specific to the current development of

capitalism can arise at different points. These he lists as follows:

Point of origin (sub-systems)	*System crisis*	*Identity crisis*
Economic	Economic crisis	—
Political	Rationality crisis	Legitimation crisis
Socio-cultural	—	Motivation crisis

His argument is that late-capitalist societies are endangered from at least one of four possible crisis tendencies. It is a consequence of the fundamental contradiction of capitalist society (social production versus private appropriation) that, other factors being equal, there is either: an economic crisis because the 'requisite quantity' of consumable values is not produced; or a rationality crisis because the 'requisite quantity' of rational decisions is not forthcoming; or a legitimation crisis because the 'requisite quantity' of 'generalised motivations' is not generated; or a motivational crisis because the 'requisite quantity' of 'action-motivating meaning' is not created. The expression 'the requisite quantity' refers to the extent and quality of the respective sub-system's products: 'value, administrative decision, legitimation and meaning'.[8]

The reconstruction of developmental tendencies in capitalism is pursued in each of these dimensions of possible crisis. For each sphere, theorems concerning the nature of crisis are discussed, theories which purport to explain crisis are evaluated, and possible strategies of crisis avoidance are considered. 'Each individual crisis argument, if it proves correct, is a sufficient explanation of a possible case of crisis.' But in the explanation of actual cases of crises, Habermas stresses, 'several arguments can supplement one another'.[9]

At the moment, in Habermas's opinion, there is no way of cogently deciding questions about the chances of the transformation of advanced capitalism. He does not exclude the possibility that economic crises can be permanently averted; if such is the case, however, contradictory steering imperatives, which assert themselves in the pressure of capital utilisation, produce a series of other crisis tendencies. That is not to say economic crises will be avoided, but that there is, as Habermas puts it, no 'logically necessary' reason why the system cannot mitigate the crisis effects as they manifest themselves in one sub-system. The consequences of controlling crises in one sub-system are achieved only at the expense of *displacing and transforming* the contradictions into another. What is presented is a typology of crisis tendencies, a logic of their development and, ultimately, a postulation that the system's identity can only be preserved at the cost of individual autonomy, i.e. with the coming of a totally administered world

in which dissent is successfully repressed and crises are defused. Since Habermas regards legitimation and motivation crises as the distinctive or central types of crisis facing advanced capitalist societies, I should like to give a brief *résumé* of them.

Increased state activity in economic and other social realms is one of the major characteristics of contemporary capitalism. In the interests of avoiding economic crisis, government and the state shoulder an increasing share of the costs of production. But the state's decisions are not based merely on economic considerations. While on the one hand, the state has the task of sustaining the accumulation process, on the other it must maintain a certain level of 'mass loyalty'. In order for the system to function, there must be a general compliance with the laws, rules, etc. Although this compliance can be secured to a limited extent by coercion, societies claiming to operate according to the principles of bourgeois democracy depend more on the existence of a widespread belief that the system adheres to the principles of equality, justice and freedom. Thus the capitalist state must act to support the accumulation process and at the same time act, if it is to protect its image as fair and just, to conceal what it is doing. If mass loyalty is threatened, a tendency towards a legitimation crisis is established.

As the administrative system expands in late capitalism into areas traditionally assigned to the private sphere, there is a progressive demystification of the nature-like process of social fate. The state's very intervention in the economy, education, etc., draws attention to issues of choice, planning and control. The 'hand of the state' is more visible and intelligible than 'the invisible hand' of liberal capitalism. More and more areas of life are seen by the general population as politicised, i.e. as falling within its (via the government's) potential control. This development, in turn, stimulates ever greater demands on the state, for example for participation and consultation over decisions. If the administrative system cannot fulfil these demands within the potentially legitimisable alternatives available to it, while at the same time avoiding economic crisis, that is, 'if governmental crisis management fails . . . the penalty . . . is withdrawal of legitimation'.[10] The underlying cause of the legitimation crisis is, Habermas states rather bluntly, the contradiction between class interests: 'in the final analysis . . . *class structure* is the source of the legitimation deficit'.[11] The state must secure the loyalty of one class while systematically acting to the advantage of another. As the state's activity expands and its role in controlling social reality becomes more transparent, there is a greater danger that this asymmetrical relation will be exposed. Such exposure would only increase the demands on the system. The state can ignore these demands only at the peril of further demonstrating its non-democratic nature.

So far the argument establishes only that the advanced capitalist state might experience legitimation problems. Is there any reason to expect that it will be confronted by a legitimation crisis? It can be maintained that since the Second World War, Western capitalism has been able to buy its way out of its legitimation difficulties (through fiscal policy, the provision of services, etc.). While demand upon the state may outstrip its ability to deliver the goods, thus creating a crisis, it is not necessary that this occurs. In order to complete his argument, therefore, and to show – as he seeks to – that 'social identity' crises are the central form of crises confronting advanced capitalism, Habermas must demonstrate that needs and expectations are being produced (on the part of at least a section of the population) which will 'tax the state's legitimizing mechanisms beyond their capacity'.

Habermas's position, in essence, is that the general development of late capitalism, and in particular the increasing incursion of the state into formerly private realms, has significantly altered the patterns of motivation formation. The continuation of this tendency will lead, he contends, to a dislocation of existing demands and commitments. Habermas analyses these issues, not under the heading 'legitimation crisis' (a point I shall come back to later), but under the heading 'motivation crisis'. 'I speak of a motivation crisis when the socio-cultural system changes in such a way that its output becomes dysfunctional for the state and for the system of social labor.'[12] This crisis will result in demands that the state cannot meet.

The discussion of the motivation crisis is complex. The two major patterns of motivation generated by the socio-cultural system in late capitalist societies are, according to Habermas, civil and familial-vocational privatism. Civil privatism engenders in the individual an interest in the output of the political system (steering and maintenance performances) but at a level demanding little participation. Familial-vocational privatism promotes a family-orientated behavioural pattern centred on leisure and consumption on the one hand, and a career interest orientated towards status competition on the other. Both patterns are necessary for the maintenance of the system under its present institutions. Habermas argues that these motivational bases are being systematically eroded in such a way that crisis tendencies can be discerned. This argument involves two theses: (1) that the traditions which produce these motivations are being eroded; and (2) that the logic of development of normative structures prevents a functionally equivalent replacement of eroded structures.

The motivational patterns of late capitalism are produced, Habermas suggests, by a mixture of traditional pre-capitalist elements (e.g. the old civic ethic, religious tradition) and bourgeois elements (e.g. possessive individualism and utilitarianism). Given this overlay of traditions, thesis (1) can itself be analysed into two parts: (a) that the pre-bourgeois

components of motivational patterns are being eroded; and (b) that the core aspects of bourgeois ideology are likewise being undermined by social developments. Habermas acknowledges that these theses can only be offered tentatively.[13]

The process of erosion of traditional (pre-bourgeois) world-views is argued to be an effect of the general process of rationalisation. This process results in, among other things, a loss of an interpretation of the totality of life and the increasing subjectivising and relativising of morality. With regard to thesis (1b), that the core elements of bourgeois ideology are being undermined, Habermas examines three phenomena: achievement ideology, possessive individualism, and the orientation towards exchange value.[14] The idea of endless competitiveness and achievement-seeking is being destroyed gradually as people lose faith in the market's capacity to distribute scarce values fairly – as the state's very intervention brings issues of distribution to the fore and, for example, the increasing level of education arouses aspirations that cannot be co-ordinated with occupational opportunity. Possessive individualism, the belief that collective goals can only be realised by private individuals acting in competitive isolation, is being undermined as the development of the state, with its contradictory functions, is (ever more) forced into socialising the costs and goals of urban life. Additionally, the orientation to exchange value is weakening as larger segments of the population – for instance, welfare clients, students, the criminal and sick, the unemployable – no longer reproduce their lives through labour for exchange value (wages), thus 'weakening the socialization effects of the market'.

The second thesis – that the logic of development of normative structures prevents a functionally equivalent replacement of eroded traditions – also has two parts. They are (a) that the remaining residues of tradition in bourgeois ideology cannot generate elements to replace those of destroyed privatism, but (b) that the remaining structures of bourgeois ideology are still relevant for motivation formation. With regard to (a), Habermas looks at three elements of the contemporary dominant cultural formation: scientism, post-auratic or post-representational art, and universalistic morality. He contends that in each of these areas the logic of development is such that the normative structures no longer promote the reproduction of privatism and that they could only do so again at the cost of a regression in social development, i.e. increased authoritarianism which suppresses conflict. In each of these areas the changing normative structures embody marked concerns with universality and critique. It is these developing concerns which undermine privatism and which are potentially threatening to the inequalities of the economic and political system.

But the undermining of privatism does not necessitate that there will be a motivation crisis. If the motivations being generated by the emerging

structures are dysfunctional for the economic and political systems, one way of avoiding a crisis would be to 'uncouple' (an obscure notion in Habermas's writings) the socio-cultural system from the political-economic system so that the latter (apparently) would no longer be dependent on the former.[15] To complete his argument Habermas must make plausible the contention that the uncoupling process has not occurred and that the remaining structures are still relevant for some type of motivation formation, i.e. thesis (2b). His claim is that evidence from studies of adolescent socialisation patterns (from Kenniston and others) and such phenomena as the students' and women's movements indicate that a new level of consciousness involving a universalistic (communicative) ethic is emerging as a functional element in motivation formation. On this basis he argues that individuals will increasingly be produced whose motivational norms will be such as to demand a rational justification of social realities. If such a justification cannot be provided by the system's legitimising mechanisms on the one hand, or bought off via distribution of value on the other, a motivation crisis is the likely outcome – the system will not find sufficient motivation for its maintenance.

Habermas's conclusion, then, is that, given its logic of crisis tendencies, organised capitalism cannot maintain its present form. If Habermas's argument is correct, then capitalism will either evolve into a kind of 'Brave New World' or it will have to overcome its underlying class contradiction. To do the latter would mean the adoption of a new principle of organisation. Such a principle would involve a universalistic morality embedded in a system of participatory democracy, i.e. an opportunity for discursive will-formation. What exact institutional form the new social formation might take Habermas does not say; nor does he say, in any detail, how the new social formation might evolve.

In the remainder of this essay, I should like to indicate a number of areas in which Habermas's formulations lead to difficulties. The areas of concern I want to single out particularly are: the relation between legitimation and motivation crises; the analysis of components of culture and social order; the boundary conditions of crisis tendencies; and questions relating to political transformation and the role of critical theory. My critical remarks have, it should be stressed, a tentative status, for Habermas's thought in each of these areas is still in the process of development.

Legitimation and motivation crises

The novelty of Habermas's conception of crisis theory lies both in his emphasis on different types of crisis tendencies and on his formulation of the idea of crisis displacement. I do not wish to question that these notions constitute a significant contribution to the understanding of social crises: the disclosure of the relation between economic, political and socio-

cultural phenomena is a vital step in overcoming the limitations of economistic theories of crisis, and of theories that place a disproportionate emphasis on the role of ideas in social change. Nevertheless, I do not think that Habermas's focus on legitimation and motivation crises is satisfactory.

In the first instance, difficulties arise because the distinction between legitimation and motivation crises is, at best, obscure. Habermas's formulation of these crisis tendencies oscillates between seeing them as distinct and conceiving of them as a single set of events. The latter position is consistent with the absence of a clear differentiation between the scarce resources to which the two types of crisis are, respectively, linked – 'generalised motivations' and 'action-motivating meaning'. As he elaborates them, legitimation and motivation crises are thoroughly enmeshed: a legitimation crisis is a crisis of 'generalised motivations', a crisis which depends on the undermining of traditional 'action-motivating meaning'; a motivation crisis is a crisis that issues in the collapse of mass loyalty. I believe the source of this ambiguity lies in an inadequate conception of the way societies cohere – that is, in a problematic emphasis on the centrality of shared norms and values in social integration and on the importance of 'internalisation' in the genesis of individual identity and social order.

For Habermas, social integration refers to 'the system of institutions in which speaking and acting subjects are socially related'. Social systems are conceived here as '*life-worlds* that are symbolically structured'. From this perspective one can 'thematize the normative structures (values and institutions) of a society'.[16] Events and states can be analysed from 'the point of view of their dependency on functions of social integration (in Parsons's vocabulary, integration and pattern maintenance)'.[17] A society's capacity for reproduction is directly connected, Habermas contends, to successful social integration. Disturbances of a society endanger its existence only if social integration is threatened; that is, 'when the *consensual foundations* of normative structures are so much impaired that the society becomes *anomic*'.[18] Although Habermas acknowledges the difference between dominant cultural value systems and meaning structures generated by individuals in their everyday lives when he criticises Parsons for not distinguishing 'institutional values' and 'motivational forces', he himself fails to utilise these distinctions adequately in his substantive analysis of capitalism.[19]

It is crucial to preserve at all levels of social theory the distinction between dominant normative prescriptions – those involved in procuring legitimation – and the 'frames of meaning' and motives of people in society. Any theory that blurs the boundaries between these, as does Habermas's crisis theory, needs to be regarded with scepticism.[20] For, as I argue below, social integration, when tied to the generation of a shared sense of 'the worthiness of a political order to be recognised' (legitimacy), is not a necessary condition for every relatively stable society.[21] Clearly, some groups have to be normatively integrated into the governing political

culture to ensure a society's reproduction. But what matters most is not the moral approval of the majority of a society's members – although this will sometimes be forthcoming, for instance during wars – but the approval of the dominant groups. Among the latter, it is the politically powerful and mobilised, including the state's personnel, that are particularly important for the continued existence of a social system.[22] Habermas does acknowledge this on some occasions, but he does not pursue its many implications.[23] His failure to do so can be explained, I think, by his use of 'unreconstructed' systems concepts and assumptions.[24] Many ideas and assumptions from systems theory – in combination with concepts from action theory, structuralism and genetic structuralism – are intermingled in his work in a manner which is often unsatisfactory and difficult to disentangle.[25] These notions do not provide a suitable framework for the analysis of social cohesion and legitimation: for theories concerned with social stability must be developed without ties to the 'internalised value–norm–moral consensus theorem' and its residues.[26] What is required here is a more adequate theory of the production and reproduction of action.

Components of culture and social order

The notion of legitimation crisis presupposes that the motivation of the mass of the population was at one time constituted to a significant extent by the normative structures established by powerful groups.[27] But Habermas, in my view, overestimates the degree to which one may consider the individual as having been integrated into society, as well as the degree to which bourgeois ideology has been eroded and the extent to which contemporary society is threatened by a 'legitimation/motivation' crisis.

If one examines the substantial number of studies debating the nature of the social cohesion of capitalist societies, one thing emerges with clarity: patterns of consciousness, especially class consciousness, vary across and within specific cultures and countries.[28] To the extent that generalisations can be made, they must take account of 'the lack of consensus' about norms, values and beliefs (excepting perhaps a general adherence to nationalism).[29] Moreover, they must recognise that a 'dual consciousness' is often expressed in communities and work-places.[30] This implies a quite radical interpretation of many everyday events – often linking dissatisfactions with divisions between the 'rich and poor', the 'rulers and ruled' – and a relatively 'conservative' (defined below), privatistic interest in dominant political parties and processes. Many institutions and processes are perceived and hypostatised as 'natural', 'the way things have been and always will be'; but the language used to express and account for immediate needs and their frustration often reveals a marked penetration of ideology or dominant interpretative systems.

Although there is evidence of dissensus and various levels of class-consciousness, it is clear, none the less, that this rarely constitutes revolutionary consciousness. There is a fairly widespread 'conservatism'

about conventional political processes; that is, seeming compliance to dominant ideas, a high interest in the system's output combined with low interest in political input (participation), and no coherent conception of an alternative to the existing order. The question is: What does this 'conservatism' mean? What does it entail? Does it reflect normative integration, depoliticisation, a combination of these, or something different again?

While Habermas argues that the legitimacy of the political order of capitalist society is related to 'the social-integrative preservation of a normatively determined social identity', I would argue that stability is related to the 'decentring' or fragmentation of culture, the atomisation of people's experiences of the social world. Fragmentation acts as a barrier to a coherent conception of the social totality – the structure of social practices and possibilities. The political order is acknowledged not because it is regarded as 'worthy' but because of the adoption of an instrumental attitude towards it; compliance most often comprises pragmatic acquiescence to the status quo. In certain places in his writings Habermas appears to recognise the importance of these points, but he does not accommodate them adequately.[31] By presupposing that the cultural system once generated a large stock of unquestioned values and norms – values which are now regarded as threatened by increased state intervention – his analysis detracts from a systematic appraisal of the process of 'atomisation' and of 'pragmatic' adaptation. I should like to discuss briefly the importance of the latter phenomena by indicating the significance of precisely those things that are least considered by Habermas – they include the social and technical division of labour (social and occupational hierarchies, the splits between unskilled and skilled and physical and mental labour), the organisation of work relations (relations between trade unions, management and state), and the 'culture industry' (the creation of a system of pseudo-gratifications).

Working-class consciousness, along with the consciousness of other social classes and groups, is impregnated by the work process. Analyses by Marcuse, as early as 1941, and more recently by Braverman, point to the significance of understanding the way in which the rationalisation and standardisation of production fragments tasks.[32] As tasks become increasingly mechanised, there are fewer and fewer chances for mental and reflective labour. Work experiences are increasingly differentiated. Knowledge of the total work process is hard to come by and rarely available, particularly for those on the shop floor. The majority of occupations (despite the possibility of a greater exchange of functions) tend to become atomised, isolated units, which *seem* to require for their cohesion 'co-ordination and management from above'. With the development of the capitalist division of labour, knowledge and control of the whole work process are ever more absent from daily work situations. Centralised control mechanisms and private and public bureaucracies then appear as

agencies which are necessary for, and guarantee,'a rational course and order'.[33] With the fragmentation of tasks and knowledge, the identity of social classes is threatened. The social relations which condition these processes are reified: they become ever harder to grasp.

A number of factors have, furthermore, conjoined to reduce the receptivity of many people to critical thinking. Aronowitz has pointed to the way the debilitating impact of the technical division of labour is compounded not only by social divisions based on ethnicity, race and sex, but also by 'the credential routes to higher occupations, the seniority system as a basis for promotion, the classification of jobs grounded in arbitrary distinctions which have no basis in job content or skill level'.[34] Social and occupational hierarchies threaten attempts to create solidarity. Moreover, organised opposition is all too often ineffective because the representatives of these forces – although they have not lost the 'title of opposition' – are vulnerable to incorporation. This has been the fate of the trade-union movement in many countries. Its organisations have been transformed into mass organisations with highly bureaucratised leadership structures, concentrating on 'economistic' issues and acting as barriers to the expression of rank-and-file protest about, among other things, lack of control of the work process.[35] Although the exact effects of these processes constitute an empirical question, there are strong reasons to believe that they further remove from the mass of people a chance to understand and affect the institutions that impinge upon their lives.

Factors such as differentiated wage structures, permanent inflation, crisis in government finances and uneven economic development – factors which disperse the effects of economic crisis, as Habermas points out, on to 'quasi-groups', consumers, the elderly, the sick, schoolchildren – are all part of a complex series which combine to make the fronts of class opposition repeatedly fragmented, less comprehensible.[36] The 'culture industry', furthermore, reinforces this state of affairs. The Frankfurt School's analysis indicates the potency of the system of pseudo-gratifications – diversions and distractions – which the culture industry generates. As Adorno showed in study after study, while the culture industry offers a temporary escape from the responsibilities and drudgery of everyday life, it reinforces the structure of the world people seek to avoid: it strengthens the belief that misfortunes and deprivations are due to natural causes or chance, thus promoting a sense of fatalism and dependence.[37]

The analysis above is, of course, incomplete and, in many ways, partial and one-sided. The point, however, is to stress the significance of a complex of institutions and developments which seemingly fragment society and people's comprehension of it. Reference to these processes explains, I believe, the research findings which indicate that many people do not have a very coherent set of beliefs, norms and values, as well as the

'conservative' component of dual consciousness. The structural conditions of work and of many other activities atomises individuals' experience and 'draws off', and/or fails to allow access to, knowledge of the work process as a whole and of the organisational principles of society. This constitutes a crucial barrier to knowledge of dominant trends in the social totality on the one hand, and to potential solidarity on the other. The 'conservative' aspects of dual consciousness comprise in many cases a mixture of pragmatic acquiescence to existing institutions and false consciousness. Pragmatic acquiescence is involved because all men and women, who seek the maintenance of their own lives, have to act 'rationally'; that is, they have to act 'according to the standards which insure the functioning of the apparatus'.[38] Few alternatives to the status quo are perceived, and it is recognised that participation in the status quo is necessary for comfort and security. False consciousness is involved (as Habermas recognises) because the asymmetrical distribution of power ('transformative capacity') in contemporary society is mobilised (albeit often unintentionally) to prevent working people from properly understanding the reality they experience. Frames of meaning often utilised to articulate needs and account for everyday life frequently diverge from the interpretative schemes employed to make sense of traditional political institutions.[39]

Modern capitalist society's stability is linked, I believe, to this state of affairs – to what has been aptly referred to as the 'lack of consensus' in the crucial intersection of concrete daily experiences and the often confused values and interpretative schemes articulated in relation to dominant institutions.[40] Stability is dependent on the atomisation or 'decentring' of knowledge of work and politics. I suspect that modern society has never been legitimated by the mass of the population. This does not mean, of course, that the political and economic order is permanently vulnerable to disintegration or revolution. The reasons for this should be apparent; the order does not depend for its reproduction on strongly shared normative ideals.

It is because of considerations such as these that I do not find convincing Habermas's view that civil and familial privatism are dependent for their efficacy on pre-capitalist traditions. A preoccupation with one's own 'lot in life', with the fulfilment of one's own needs, is both a product of, and an adaptive mechanism to, contemporary society. The social and technical division of labour, in a society orientated towards the maximisation of profit, is, it seems, a sufficient condition for atomisation, isolation and privatism. It is for these reasons also that I do not find convincing Habermas's belief that the forces undermining achievement ideology, the orientation to exchange, etc., have further delegitimising effects. A more plausible position is that, in the context of an atomised society, changes of this kind enhance an already widespread scepticism about the virtue of existing political institutions, a cynicism and a pragmatic/instrumental orientation. Furthermore, at the empirical level there is no ready evidence

to support Habermas's contention of the potentially imminent realisation of a communicative ethics – the highest stage of the human being's 'inner cognitive logic'. Contemporary changes in normative structures have, at best, a very ambiguous relationship to discursive will-formation, universality and critique.[41] On the available evidence (and in light of there being no substantial evidence in his own work), there does not seem to be a sufficient basis to locate the emergence of a principle of organisation of a 'post-modern' society.

But to disagree with Habermas's conception of the vulnerability of contemporary Western society is not to deny, of course, that the system is faced with severe challenges – challenges to the basis on which rights and obligations are structured. The question to ask, however, is not under what conditions will there be a legitimation crisis (although, it must be added, this question remains relevant to the state's personnel and to dominant groups generally), but under what conditions can the 'cognitive penetration' of the order be radically extended? Or, to put the question in the terminology used hitherto, under what conditions can pragmatic, dual, fragmented consciousness be overcome and a grasp of the social totality (the organisational principles determining the allocation of 'value' and 'meaning' and alternatives to them) be rendered possible? Answers to this question depend less, I believe, on factors affecting social identity and more on economic and political crisis tendencies in capitalism. The issues discussed below are only some of those that require analysis; they are *not* intended as a direct response to the question just raised.

The boundary conditions of system crises

System crises (economic and rationality) can, on Habermas's account, be potentially contained (although it does not follow that they will be). Containment occurs, however, only at the cost of increasing legitimation pressures on the state: the state is the interface at which the tensions of both system integration and social integration meet. Habermas's argument rests, of course, on the claim that organised capitalism can control its potential system crises. Can this claim be supported?

Most of Habermas's remarks on system crises centre upon considerations of the nation-state; that is, the focus is on the changing relation between the state and economy within an ideal-typical capitalist country. His discussion of past and present economic tendencies pays little, if any, attention to developments of international capitalism. He raises important considerations in connection with the law of value; but the referent and context is usually that of the nation-state. It is crucially important to explore the development of capitalism in one country in the context of international political economy. The capitalist world was created in dependence on an international market and is ever more dependent on international trade. Before one can conclude that economic crises can be contained (on either a national or an international level), the relationship

between economic crises in the nation-state and crisis tendencies in the international market must be better analysed and explained. These issues deserve a much more substantial treatment than Habermas gives them. Without an analysis of them, Habermas's conception of the logic of crisis development can be questioned, for the political-economic constraints on capitalist development appear much less open to control and manipulation than Habermas suggests.

In his recent work on the development of the modern state, Poggi has emphasised the significance of 'the highly contingent, inherently dangerous' nature of the international system of nation-states.[42] Wallerstein's analysis of the 'European world economy' indicates the importance of comprehending economic interconnections between nation-states which are beyond the control of any one such state.[43] Disproportionate economic development and uneven development generally within and between advanced industrial societies and Third World countries have serious implications for any conception of the logic or dynamic of crisis – implications which should centre attention on the primacy of struggles over who is on the centre and periphery, who controls what resources, and over a host of other basic differences in material interests.

Furthermore, although Habermas recognises the significance of analysing different types of state activity, the nature of crisis management, and the organisational logic (rationality) of the administrative apparatus, he does not, as far as I know, stress the need for a differentiated analysis of state forms, party structures and the relation of government and party structures to socio-economic structure. This also has consequences for an analysis of crisis tendencies; for it is precisely these things, analysed in the context of international conditions and pressures, that have been shown to be crucial determinants in key cases of political and 'social-revolutionary' crisis. [44] No analytic account of crisis tendencies can claim completeness without examining these phenomena.

Political transformation and critical theory

One of the most distinctive features of the Marxist tradition – a tradition with which Habermas closely identifies – is a concern to draw from an examination of 'what exists' an account of 'what exists in possibility'. Inquiry into historical conditions and processes is linked to a desire to reveal political potentialities. In the third and final part of *Legitimation Crisis*, Habermas focuses directly on the problem of analysing potentiality. He argues that a critique of ideology, concerned both with the existing pattern of distorted communication and with how things could be otherwise, must take as its starting-point the 'model of the suppression of generalizable interests'.[45] The model permits a comparison of the normative structures of a society with those which hypothetically would be the case if norms were arrived at, *ceteris paribus*, discursively.[46] Linked to a number of assumptions about the conditions under which conflict breaks

out, the model establishes the basis for what Habermas calls 'the advocacy role' of critical theory.

The advocacy role consists in 'ascertaining generalizable, though nevertheless suppressed, interests in a representatively simulated discourse between groups that are differentiated . . . from one another by an articulated, or at least virtual, opposition of interests'.[47] Using such indicators of potential conflict as discrepancies between claims and demands, and politically permitted levels of satisfaction, one can, Habermas maintains, indicate the nature of ideological repression and the level of generalisable interests possible at a given historical point. In the final analysis 'the theory serves to enlighten its addressees about the position which they occupy in an antagonistic social system and about the interests of which they could become conscious as objectively their own'.[48]

The following questions – frequently put to those in the tradition of critical theory – are pertinent: To whom is critical theory addressed? How, in any concrete situation, can critical theory be applied? Who is to be the instigator or promoter of enlightenment? It is clear that a discussion of these issues is important if Habermas is to argue successfully that the organisation of enlightenment at the social level can be fashioned after critical theory. Yet, as these issues are only discussed in Habermas's writings at a most abstract level, it is difficult to draw any specific political conclusions from his advocacy model and crisis argument. Within the terms of reference of his work on modern capitalist societies we remain very much in the dark as to political processes and events. The practical implications of his theory are left undeveloped.

Habermas might reply to this charge by saying that at the present time it is extremely difficult to draw any definite political conclusions from the state of contemporary advanced capitalist countries. He might say, moreover, that while aspects of his analysis undermine the traditional faith of orthodox Marxists, other aspects suggest the importance of social struggles over gender, race, ecology and bureaucracy, as well as over the nature and quantity of state goods and services and over economistic issues. With both of these points I would agree. However, in the context of what seems to be widespread scepticism (or cynicism) about politics – understood as traditional party politics – and the success of 'cold war' attitudes (and, of course, Stalinism itself) in discrediting socialist ideals, this does not seem enough. There is a need, greater than ever I believe, to establish the credibility of socialism, to develop concrete proposals for alternative ways of organising society and to show how these can be connected to wants and demands that crystallise in people's experience of dominant social relations.[49] In a fascinating interview for *Rinascita*, the weekly journal of the Italian Communist Party, Habermas himself appears to express sympathy for this enterprise.[50] But it is hard to see how his own investigations of advanced capitalism connect in a direct way with this project.

Notes and References

Crisis tendencies, legitimation and the state (David Held)

1. See Boris Frankel, 'The State of the State after Leninism', *Theory and Society*, 7 (1979) pp. 199–242.
2. *TRS*, p. 101.
3. Ibid, pp. 63–4, 106–7.
4. Ibid, p. 105.
5. See *LC*, part II.
6. Ibid, ch. 4
7. Cf., for example, James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973); Andrew Schonfield, *Modern Capitalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); and the work of Claus Offe on the capitalist state, e.g. 'Political Authority and Class Structure', in *Critical Sociology*, ed. P. Connerton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) pp. 388–421.
8. *LC*, p. 49.
9. Ibid, pp. 49–50.
10. Ibid, p. 69.
11. Ibid, p. 73.
12. Ibid, p. 75.
13. Ibid, pp. 81–4.
14. Ibid, pp. 84–92.
15. Ibid, pp. 90, 117ff.
16. Ibid, p. 4. By contrast, Habermas speaks of system integration 'with a view to the specific steering-performances of a self-regulated *system*. Social systems are considered here from the point of view of their capacity to maintain their boundaries and their continued existence by mastering the complexity of an inconstant environment' (ibid, p. 4). Both perspectives, 'life-world' and 'system' are, Habermas stresses, important.
17. Ibid, pp. 4–5.
18. Ibid, p. 3 (my emphasis).
19. Cf., for example, his discussion in *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970) pp. 181–2; and *LC*, pp. 75–6.
20. See Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979) especially pp. 85–7, 101–3, for an elaboration of this point.
21. Habermas explicates this concept of legitimacy in 'Legitimation Problems in the Modern State', in *CES*, pp. 178–205. My argument owes a good deal to Michael Mann, 'The Ideology of Intellectuals and Other People in the Development of Capitalism', in *Stress and Contradiction in Modern Capitalism*, ed. Leon N. Lindberg *et al.* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1975), and to Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, ch. 2.
22. But even a crisis of legitimacy among some of these groups, it should be stressed, can leave a social system quite stable so long as the system's coercive organisations remain effective. See Theda Skocpol, 'State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia, and China', *Theory and Society*, 7 (1979).
23. Cf. *LC*, p. 22.
24. Cf. Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1978) p. 379.
25. Habermas has stressed the necessity for unifying systems-theoretic perspectives with insights from other approaches. But he has not, as yet, formulated an integrated framework for inquiry. This task appears to be the topic of his

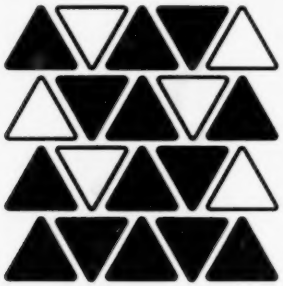
current research. But until it is published the methodological framework of his work will remain unclear. Cf. 'Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism' and 'Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures', in *CES*, especially pp. 125, 169; and *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*, pp. 164–84.

26. Cf. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, p. 87.
27. Habermas argues that with the development of the liberal-capitalist social formation the economic sub-system took over certain socially integrative tasks, i.e. integration was accomplished in part through exchange relations. But although he emphasises the importance of understanding the ways in which social integration achieved through norms and values is replaced with a system integration operating through exchange (and the ideology of the exchange of equivalents), he also emphasises how the loyalty and support of the proletariat to the political order is dependent upon pre-capitalist traditions. See *LC*, pp. 20–6; and 'Legitimation Problems in the Modern State', in *CES*, p. 190.
28. See, for example, Michael Mann, *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class* (London: Macmillan, 1973); and Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (London: Hutchinson, 1977).
29. Mann, 'The Ideology of Intellectuals and Other People in the Development of Capitalism', p. 276. A strong case can be made that the only groups highly committed to dominant ideologies are those that created them, i.e. the dominant classes and groups. See Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan S. Turner, 'The Dominant Ideology Thesis', *British Journal of Sociology*, 29 (1978).
30. Cf. Michael Mann, 'The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy', *American Sociological Review*, 35 (1970); and Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, ch. 11.
31. See Habermas's early work, especially *Toward A Rational Society* and *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, for important analyses of the expansion of instrumental reason into everyday life. *Toward a Rational Society* is a considerable aid to understanding the impersonal nature of domination.
32. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 9 (1941); and Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: the Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).
33. Marcuse, 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', pp. 430–1.
34. Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: the Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973) p. 408. Although Aronowitz focuses on factors that have affected the American working class, his analysis has more general implications.
35. Cf. Aronowitz, *False Promises*, ch. 4; and Mann, *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class*, especially chs 2 and 3.
36. Cf. *LC*, pp. 38–9.
37. For a more detailed analysis of Adorno's views see my *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (London: Hutchinson, 1980) ch. 3.
38. Marcuse, 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', p. 424.
39. The mode in which the latter are understood can be traced back, in part, to schooling, learning to labour, and to the culture industry – to socialisation processes which embody ideas and theories about life which do not coincide with many people's own accounts of the 'realities of working life'. Cf., for example, Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Westmead: Saxon House, 1977).
40. See Mann, 'The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy', pp. 436–7.

41. It might be objected that Habermas's case could be made stronger by reference to his theory of social evolution and his theory of the logic of development of normative structures. But these theories cannot, in my view, be drawn upon until they are more fully elaborated.
42. Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (London: Hutchinson, 1978) ch. 5.
43. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974). Habermas recognises the importance of this issue for understanding 'the *external aspect* of the new [modern] state structures', but he does not explicate their relevance for the logic of crisis tendencies.
44. See Theda Skocpal, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979). The significance of analysing state forms – focusing, in particular, on the changing relation between parliament and administrative branches – has recently been stressed in the debate over the development of corporatism. See, for example, Bob Jessop, 'Corporatism, Parliamentarism and Social Democracy', in *Patterns of Corporatist Intermediation*, ed. P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979).
45. See *LC*, pp. 111-17.
46. Ibid, p. 113.
47. Ibid, p. 117.
48. *TP*, p. 32 (translation modified).
49. Cf. Frankel, 'The State of the State after Leninism', pp. 232–9.
50. A translation of this interview has appeared in *New Left Review*, 115 (May–June 1979).

Source: D. Held, 'Crisis tendencies, legitimation and the state', in J. B. Thompson & D. Held (eds), *Habermas: Critical Debates*, Macmillan, London, 1982, pp. 181–95, 306–8.

Annotated bibliography



General works

There are, of course, innumerable reviews of the historical development of social and political thought. These three are characteristic of the genre and perhaps a little better than most.

Bramstead, E. K., & Mellhuish, K. J. (eds). *Western Liberalism: A History in Documents from Locke to Croce.* Longmans, London, 1978.
Contains a series of useful introductory essays on various strands of liberal thought as they developed differing national characteristics in England, France and Germany. Also has essays on the doctrine of human rights; the classical economists and the utilitarians; aesthetic individualism; and constitutional government. The bulk of the volume comprises a wide and representative selection of documents written by leading liberals beginning with Locke in 1688 and ending with Madariaga in 1948. Contains a useful biographical list.

Held, D., Anderson, J., Gieben, B., Hall, S., Harris, L., Lewis, P., Parker, N., & Turok, B. (eds). *States and Societies.* Martin Robertson in association with The Open University, Oxford, 1983.
Perhaps the most useful general source of background information for this monograph. Contains a superb introduction by David Held that identifies the various central perspectives on the modern state. This is followed by seven essays by various authors on classic conceptions of the state; the formation of modern states; citizenship, society and the state; state and economy; power, legitimacy and the state; nation-states and the world context; and future directions for the state. Appended to each essay are brief extracts from crucial sources. Highly recommended.

Skinner, Q. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought.* 2 Vols. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978.
One of the more accessible and respected contemporary accounts of the emergence of the idea of the state as an impersonal, privileged, authority, constitutionally empowered with the capability of administering and controlling a given territory.

The origins and traditions of liberalism

Clearly, liberalism is a broad stream of intellectual and political achievement to which many have contributed. The key works referred to here are a very short list.

Bentham, J. *A Fragment on Government and An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.* ed. & intro. W. Harrison. Blackwell, Oxford, 1948.
Bentham's writings were a battle-cry against the existing privileges of the landed aristocracy and the interference of the government in the liberty of the individual. His political radicalism advocated that the majority of the people should decisively participate in political power and that the greatest good would be brought about by the 'felicific calculus' of the individual pursuit of pleasure.

Hobbes, T. *Leviathan or, The Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. ed. M. Oakeshott & intro. R. S. Peters. Collier Books, New York, 1962.
Leviathan is Hobbes's most important and influential book. Essentially it is a defence of absolute government which supported the Royalist cause against the claims of the Catholic Church. In explaining the origin of the state he rejects the theory of divine right but attempts to deny the possibility of justifying any form of revolution against a sovereign power.

Locke, J. *Two Treatises of Government*. 2nd edn, ed. & crit. P. Laslett. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967.
The first of the two treatises is largely a refutation of Filmer's *Patriacha*. The second is the core of Locke's work in which he examines the origins and uses of political power, contrasting the state of nature with the 'ill condition' of mankind through which they are 'driven into Society'.

Mill, J. S. *On Liberty*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1982.
Mill added a *qualitative* dimension to the arguments of the early utilitarians. While agreeing with, indeed extending their ideas of participation towards universal sufferage, J. S. Mill also argued in this famous essay that the freedom *from* tyranny achieved by such means should be supplemented by a freedom *for* originality, spontaneity and personal development based on the life of the mind.

Rousseau, J.-J. *The Social Contract*. tr. & intro. M. Cranston. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968.
In this volume Rousseau puts forward his view of the ideal state. Based upon the model of the agrarian, peasant communities of the Swiss Canton, Rousseau's ideal society envisages an equal dependence of each individual on each other in the community. The general will is therefore the expression of shared interests and of an equality of legal, economic and political power. Such conditions, he believed, would ensure a continuing moral consensus as the basis of the social contract.

Modern dilemmas of liberalism

Crozier, M., Huntington, S. P., & Watanuki, J. *The Crisis of Democracy*. New York University Press, New York, 1975.
This volume is the product of one of the 'think tanks'—the Trilateral Commission—that are periodically set up in the United States by 'private citizens' to promote the study and publication of their views on various issues. The Trilateral Commission was chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski and included Arthur Schlesinger and Seymour Lipset on its board. The analysis was produced by Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki. Several of those involved in this project—Schlesinger, Lipset and Huntington—are among the 'nervous liberals' whose work is assessed by Walzer and Steinfels. The purpose of the volume is 'the promotion of the central purposes of the democratic system of government: the combination of personal liberty with the enhancement of social progress'.

Dahl, R. A. *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1975.
Dahl is one of the leading 'pluralists' in the United States of America. This is, in fact the classical 'pluralist' study of the governance of an American city which is notable for the inclusion of a great deal of data against which its claims may be assessed.

Laski, H. J. *The Rise of European Liberalism: An Essay in Interpretation*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1936.
One of the early socialist reviews of the traditions of liberalism. Stresses both the diversity of those traditions, 'winds of doctrine so diverse in their origin as to make clarity difficult', and the illiberal effects of liberalism on the working classes.

Lindblom, C. E. *Politics and Markets*. Basic Books, New York, 1977.
Like Dahl, a neo-pluralist, Lindblom argues that the relationship between politics and markets is such that the options of government are limited by the demands of accumulation, and, conversely, that the legitimation of government depends upon its insistence that businessmen perform their productive tasks efficiently. In this respect the neo-pluralists depart from the classical economics of the early liberals.

Manne, R. (ed.). *The New Conservatism in Australia*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1982.
In case you should think that neo-conservatism is a northern hemisphere phenomenon, these essays represent the new/old right in Australia. While labelled 'neo-conservatives', the authors represented here are largely inheritors of the Menzies tradition and display 'little sympathy for the more doctrinaire enthusiasts of monetarism and the unshackled Free-Market'. In fact this is a sort of Clayton's neo-conservatism – the kind to which you are committed when you are not really committed. Includes essays by Chipman, Knopfelmacher, Santamaria, Barnard and O'Brien – neo-conservatives all.

Sawyer, M. (ed.). *Australia and the New Right*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982.
A collection of 'left' papers reviewing the tentative emergence of neo-conservatism in Australia. Contains some fairly stinging criticism of 'the politics of backlash', especially of the right-wing attack on 'whatever progress towards social justice has occurred'. Makes interesting reading and, laid alongside Manne's book, is a representation of the debate engendered by Fraserism in the early 1980s.

Spragens, T. A. *The Irony of Liberal Reason*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.
A very scholarly and readable account of the problems and difficulties of liberalism with special emphasis on its epistemological, ontological and anthropological problems. It is both a critical and a sympathetic account written by one who wishes to resuscitate the ideals of classical liberalism but avoid the pitfalls.

Steinfels, P. *The Neo-Conservatives: The Men who are Changing America's Politics*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979.
The emergence of the new conservatism is an international phenomenon. Variously labelled 'libertarian', 'neo-conservatism' or 'the new right', those occupying this position in the political spectrum take the starting point of their analysis as the 'failure' of Keynsian economics and the allegedly malign effects of 'big' (socialist) government. Steinfels's volume was one of the early studies of key members of the new right in the United States of America.

Walzer, M. *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat*. Basic Books, New York, 1980.
This is a volume of elegantly written essays by a leading member of the 'left'. Walzer calls himself an 'unreconstructed democrat' and in those essays on the welfare state, civic virtue, Watergate, conservative politics, the new left, violence, and the peace movement, among others, presents a series of thoughtful critiques of both liberalism and the new left. A pleasure to read.

Liberalism, Marxism and the struggle for the state

Like liberal scholarship, Marxist scholarship has developed many strands, especially over the past twenty years during the rise of neo-Marxism and the re-emergence of critical theory. This is but a brief selection.

Habermas, J. *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics*. Heinemann, London, 1971.
This series of essays on the role of universities, the student movement, science, technology and politics is largely concerned with the relationships between knowledge, communication and action in modern industrial societies. The final essay, a tribute to Marcuse, is especially concerned with the relationships between democracy, technocratic consciousness and social evolution.

Habermas, J. *Legitimation Crisis*. Heinemann, London, 1976.
This volume presents the core of Habermas's thesis regarding the crisis tendencies of modern capitalism. It is a wide-ranging, synthetic work of considerable originality. Drawing on systems theory, phenomenological sociology and Marxism, Habermas revitalises the critical theorists' cultural analysis, shows how economic, rationality, legitimation and motivational crises are emerging in late capitalism, and indicates the importance of a theory of communicative ethics in the evolution of political practice. Essential, though occasionally difficult, reading.

Lenin, V.I. *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1969.
The *Selected Works* covers a great deal of ground. Many of the essays are hortatory political documents written with revolutionary purposes in mind. The essay of particular importance for this monograph is that called 'State and revolution' in which Lenin sets forth the possible relationships between state and bureaucracy in a post-revolutionary society.

Marx, K. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. 3rd edn. Progress Publishers, New York, 1954.
In this analysis of the rise of Louis Napolean Bonaparte between 1848 and 1852, Marx documents the emergence of a powerful executive which took power from both the capitalist class and the civil society. While arguing that the establishment of such an executive allows a degree of independence for the state in relation to the immediate interests of the dominant class, Marx argues that in the long term the Bonapartist regime could not help but sustain the interests of the bourgeoisie, whose control of the productive forces of French society provided the resources for the maintenance of the regime.

Marx, K., & Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967.
The *Communist Manifesto*, unlike the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, is a polemical tract. It does, however, represent clearly Marx's view that the state is less a site for autonomous political action than a mechanism of class domination; that is to say, the state is essentially controlled by those who control the means of production. Moreover, Marx also argues here that such rule is misrepresented, in that under capitalism the particular interests of the bourgeoisie are presented as the 'public' or general interest.

Miliband, R. *The State in Capitalist Society*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1969.
Miliband restated the Marxist position in this volume by arguing that in contemporary Western societies the ruling class not only owns the means of production but has also captured the state through its close social and cultural links with powerful institutions such as the military, political parties, media, universities, etc., and its disproportionate representation in the steering structures of the state apparatus. The state is therefore a mechanism for the representation of class interests.

O'Connor, J. *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*. St Martin's Press, New York, 1973.
O'Connor is representative of the American empirical economics strain of neo-Marxist analysis, as opposed to the European hermeneutic tradition that has influenced Habermas. In this volume he argues that increased state intervention in the economy is a direct result of inter-capitalist rivalry. It is argued that the falling rate of profit engendered by such rivalry has produced a fiscal crisis and only widespread state intervention on behalf of capital can restore conditions of profitable accumulation. A fascinating, hard-headed account of state–capital relations.

Poulantzas, N. *Political Power and Social Classes*. New Left Books, London, 1973.
This volume is devoted to an analysis which rejects Miliband's views on the direct control of the state by capital. Rather than accept the 'subjectivist' approach – via analysis of the relations between members of classes, state and bureaucray – Poulantzas argues for a structural analysis of the mechanisms through which the state actively operates to promote both the

unity and interests of the ruling class and the political disorganisation of the working class. Such mechanisms are essential, suggests Poulantzas, because the dominant classes are vulnerable to fragmentation (see O'Connor's argument). This view is rejected by Habermas.

Thompson, J. B., & Held, D. (eds). *Habermas: Critical Debates*. Macmillan, London, 1982.
A really first-class collection of critical reviews of various aspects of Habermas's work. Habermas responds in a lengthy and fascinating 'Reply to my critics'. Of particular interest is Held's essay and critique 'Crisis tendencies, legitimation and the state', Arato's paper 'Critical sociology and authoritarian state socialism', and Habermas's reply.

Weber, M. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. ed. G. Roth & C. Wittich. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.
While Weber was not a Marxist, he is included here because he was so much influenced by Marx though his conclusions were very different from those of Marx's inheritors such as Lenin. *Economy and Society*, along with *Parliament and Government in a Reconstructed Germany*, sets out his essentially pluralist position. Of most interest in this work, however, is his analysis of the role of parliament and bureaucracy, and of the need for strong political control of the enormous potential power of bureaucracy.

Wright, E. O. *Class, Crisis and the State*. New Left Books, London, 1978.
This is a brilliant analysis in the American neo-Marxist tradition of the crisis tendencies of the relations between economy, class and the state and of the role of the state bureaucracy in such crises.

About the author

Richard Bates is Associate Professor of Educational Administration in the School of Education, Deakin University. Prior to his current appointment, he was Senior Lecturer in Education, Massey University, New Zealand.

After completing teacher training at Wellington Teacher's College he taught in urban and rural primary and intermediate schools before returning to university to complete his degrees. Appointed to the School of Education, Massey University, in 1968 he was awarded a Nuffield Foundation Commonwealth Travelling Fellowship in 1976, part of which he spent at the London Institute of Education as a research associate.

Richard was involved in the establishment of distance programs graduate training in educational administration at Massey University and in the establishment of the New Zealand Educational Administration Society and the New Zealand Association for Researchers in Education.

Since his appointment to Deakin University, he has been responsible for the development of both Graduate Diploma and Master's programs in educational administration and for the development of the School's program of higher degrees by research. He is an active member of numerous national and international professional associations, and an editor and author of wide experience in educational administration, sociology of education and the relationship between theory and practice. His current preoccupations are the development of a critical theory of educational administration, studies of schools as negotiated realities, and research into policy formation and the organisation of education in Australia.

Acknowledgements

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Prolegomena to the Study of Public Administration
ISBN 0 7300 0301 9
Cat. no. ESA844M04